International Conference on Sanskrit
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# Heroes in the Javanese Classical Literature : Ramayana and Mahabharata

By

Noriah Mohamed (ATMA UKM, Malaysia)

## Introduction

In any literary work "man" takes the major role in representing the character, which entails actions. These actions are given meanings and interpretations. In some of the folktales. "animals" are given the role of a man. Their actions are linked with the daily life of a man. Thus, man is the focus in conveying the message couched in literary works.

File 6.

## Definition of "Hero"

The "hero" is the main actor in any literary work. The character of a hero is often attributed to the portrayal of moral values and principles in life. In fiction, for examples the writer introduced characters that exemplify universal values. The character can be protagonists or antagonists.

Invariably a "character" created by the writer will represent the values cherished by the writer. The writer is regarded as the "dalang" in portraying the actors involved. This phenomenon exists in Javanese literature, where the character of a man becomes the focus. To underscore the role of a hero, it is pertinent to study the stages in the development of Javanese literature. Every stage has its own hero befitting the scenario and period available. In this paper the discussion focuses only on *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata.*

## Stages

Javanese literature can he categorized into three stages based on the usage of language and style of writing.

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## Stages

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Stage 1 Early Javanese literature: beginning from 8th to the early Majapahit period.

Stage 2 · Middle Javanese Literature: beginning from the "Majapahit period until the downfall of the kingdom.

Stage 3 New Javanese Literature: beginning from the 17th to the 19th century. (Ronggawarsita's period).

(Noriah, 1987. 404)

Besides the above categorization, the Javanese literature is also divided according to genre.

a) Works during the Hindu period
b) Works during the Majapahit period
c) Works during the Islamic period
d) Works during the Mataram period.

This periodization is further extended:

1) Works during Surakarta
2) Contemporary works

(M. Geonadi. 1960: 175)

Nevertheless it is quite difficult to come up with a clear cut division because elements of Indian influence is found throughout. For example, the theme of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* epic is employed in the middle Javanese period and even up to the contemporary period. Thus, It is quite safe to say that the above periodization is arbitrary. It is meant as a broad guideline to determine the characteristics of those literary writings.

**Ramayana**

This early Javanese literature can be referred to works written in the form of *Kekawin.* Most of their content is taken from *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana.* Indirectly the main actors who are given the focus are Rama taken from *Ramayana* and Arjuna from *Mahabharata.* In *Ramayana,* Rama is the protagonist. Good values are embodied in him. Rama is regarded as an

obedient son, a compassionate husband to his wife, a loving brother, and a just and tactful King in the battle field.

The character of Rama is regarded as an ideal character in Javanese literature especially Javanese Literature written in the form of *Kekawin Ramayana*. It must be noted that the Story of Rama is also written in prose form such as in *Utarakanda* (Poerbatjaraka, 1957:7).

The popularity of Rama in Java is not only restricted to the two texts mentioned above but it is also found in the form of sculptural works such as those found in the Panataran Shrine (East Java) and the Prambanan Shrine (Yogyakarta). The character of Rama has also inspired most of the traditional shadow play puppeteers or narrators. As a result, the story of Rama entitled *Serat Kanda Ning Ringgit Purwa* is regarded as a shadow play with the character of Rama and Sita symbolising eternal love between the two beings.

In Javanese "Pewayangan" or play, the protagonist Rama experiences transformation to suit the Javanese "taste" culminating in the change in name. Rama is changed to Ramabadra at times to Ramawijaya. It has been widely accepted that the personality of Rama is regarded as an ideal figure as acknowledged by Begawan Yogiswara:

> Listen, 0, sons especially you Raden Ramabadra, or Raden Ramawijaya. You are an incarnate of Betara Vishnu sojourns on this earth to preserve this universal tranquility. There is no power that surpasses or hinders yours. You are a diligent warrior in doing good deeds.
>
> (Sunardi D.M. 1979:18)

The character of Rama in *Ramayana* (Indian Version) portrays the attitude of *dharma* as a human being. For this reason his character is regarded as an ideal character to be emulated by the Hindus. This can be seen from the incidence where Rama demanded that his father keep his pledge, to Kaikeyi to instal Bharata (Rama's brother) as King. In this respect, Rama symbolises *dharma* in

Hinduism. Taken as a whole, the story of *Ramayana* can be regarded as portrayal of another world attached to the divine pattern that overpowers man's ability through the rules of *dharma.* (Ali Hj. Ahmad, 1986:5).

Rama is regarded as an incarnate of Vishnu, born into this earth to eliminate injustice done by Ravana. The supernatural power of Rama is often highlighted in Javanese literature. Thus Rama is created as a perfect being both physically and spiritually. In order to understand fully the character of Rama it is pertinent to note the following;

**(a) As An Obedient Son.**

This commendable character of Rama has captured the minds of those who advocate Javanese literature. The reason being that despite being ordered to leave Ayuthia, Rama did not retaliate, on the contrary he acquiesced to the demand. Rama's patience has been regarded as an example, *par excellence*, in Javanese society. Legally speaking being the eldest, he has the right to the throne. As a matter of fact, he had been declared as the rightful ruler of Ayuthia;

Tinarik ing Singasana,
Punggawa sami ngestreni,
Yen ingkang rama magawan,
Bujana sumilih silih
Tusuk sagung kang nangkil,
Sasolahe boja nutug
Kondur Sri Dasarata
Miwah Kang putra,
Angadhaton sareng maksih nunggil pura.

(Sunardi D.M. 1979:29)

Meaning:

elevated to the throne
witnessed by courtiers
the father becomes Cleric,
plentiful of dishes,

> those present were well-fed
> returns Sri Dasarata to the palace
> together with his off-springs.

In whatever circumstances encountered. Rama has never shown his anger or bad temper. To him anything that happens is fated. All these qualities that Rama possesses conform with Javanese goods values as found in "*sabar*" (patience) "*narima*" (contented) "*rela*" (sincere) "*pasrah*" (leave everything to God). (De Jong. 1976:20). As indicated above. Rama becomes the central figure to he emulated by people at barge as portrayed in Javanese literature.

In the context of *wayang purwa*, or shadow-play the character of Rama symbolises an obedient son portrayed in a most dramatic scene specifically during the time he is about to leave Ayuthia to allow his brother Barata to rule the country:

> Prince Barata rushed-out after his brother. seized him by hand. emphatically asserted that he would never deprive him of his rightful inheritance. With tears in his eves he urged him to remain. But for Rama. the King's command was law to which he felt himself bound. both as a loving son, as a loyal subject, in obsolete obedience. and in a voice choking with emotion, he replied, "No, no my good brother. The crown belongs to you. Of that there can he no question. Therefore govern our great country in peace, with wisdom, mercy and justice, and you shall have my blessing...

(Sunardjo Haditjaroko, 1986:15)

**b) As A Loving Husband**

As a husband to Sita, Rama has never cast his eyes onto other lass. This is evident when he rejected Sarpanaka (Malay version, Surapandaki) who enticed him.

> Don't ever dream of my love. My love is only devoted to my wife alone, the one known as puteri Mantili Dewi sinta, whose beauty has never been surpassed, not even by the lasses in heaven. Where on this earth

can we find a lady as beautiful as my wife,
she has both external and internal beauty.
Her loyalty to husband is unquestionable.
There has not been an inkling in my heart to
marry another lady, suffice she alone to be
my beloved wife. Why don't you approach
my brother, Lesmana, maybe he is willing.

(Suwardi D.M. 1979:46)

Rama's love toward Sinta was not only lip-service, rather it was true love; with all his heart and soul. This was manifested in his strive to procure the kijang emas (golden deer) or the *Kijang Kencana* (Javanese version) for his wife. As a matter of fact, this *Kijang Kencana* was marica incarnate who served as an errand boy for Rahwana. The level of love that Rama had experienced can be gleaned from the incidence when Sinta was kidnapped by Rahwana. Rama went crazy and mad. In the midst of hallucination he smiled at Sinta's aura, and ran after "her" saying:

"My dear beloved baby, Mantili, don't ever entice me"

(Sunardi D.M. 1979:61)

The kind of psychological depression that Rama had to overcome is also depicted in *Tembang Macapat* of the Kinanthi type.

Gandrung-gandrung amangun kung,
Konus rarasing wiyadi,
Keris reresing wardaya,
Yayah kang panon wiyati,
Sirap soroting baskara,
Kadya tungkep ing pratiwi.

(Sunardi D.M. 1979:61)

Meanings:

He was madly in love,
His happiness is snatched
His heart is sliced
His view's blurred
The sun' rays dim
As if it covers the earth

For those who are deeply in love, Rama is regarded as an ideal lover who aspires to live together for ever. In the Malay version, the character of Rama has been protagonised as being devoid of a soul due to the disappearance of Sita. He fainted for four days and four nights (Shellabear), while in another version, for forty days and forty nights (Roorda). Thus it is not presumptuous to say that the character of Rama has become the "idol" of hero worship amongst the literary populace in this region.

The disappearance of Sita for several years had never daunted Rama's Love toward Sita. In the act of adoration to express love for Sita, Rama even invoked death to come to him.

Marota Ion saha riris titis,
Maweh ngenes ngrurujit tyasing wang,
Adhuh-adhuh lahee-lahee,
Paran wasaneng gandrung,
Laraningsun kembanging pati,
Pati pati pantara,
Pantaraning tuwuh,
Tumuwuh tuman kataman,
Yen tan nana jawata kang asih,
Banjuten banjurena.

(Sunardi D.M. 1979:73,74)

Meaning:

The breeze and drizzle
I feel my heart is sliced
Ah... what ends to this long
The richness of love is like death
Death approaches like blooming flowers in the garden:
If I don't get help from god,
I do not know what will happen
Oh god please betray myself.

### c) As A Just Ruler

Albeit Rama was never portrayed as a Ruler to a particular kingdom, yet from the role he played in assisting Sugriwa, he headed the army to fight Rahwana and proved himself as an able leader-ruler. The following anecdote suffices:

> "Subali (Sugriwa's brother). I have contemplated much over my action. Never in my life have i killed innocent people... Only those who commit sin. Subali... you were the one who separated Sugriwa from his beloved wife... You have given aji-aji. Pancason to Rahwana, the tyrant king, whose heinous act unsurpassed. But this very act is even worse.

(Sunardi D.M.. 1979.95)

Notwithstanding that Subali was known to he a traitor. Rama with all intents and purposes acted justly whereby he ordered the remains of Subali to be duly treated according to the Hindu rites. Rama in this respect, unlike the ruler of Malaka who annihilated Kitol together with his offspring, even the remnant of his hut was thrown to sea (*Sejarah Melayu*) . Rama never resorted to vengeful act. The same holds true when Rama encountered the death of Rawana upon which Rama was reported to have said the following;

> "Rawana fought as a true hero, and was killed as a warrior. His death is sufficient to have his sin absolved. Death does not call for bereavement, rather Rawana has entered heaven".

(I. Gusti Made Widia, T.T:311)

It is beyond doubt that Rama has equalled an ideal leader espoused by the Javanese literary populace:

1. Consistency in the worship of God.
2. Loyal and sincere which are regarded as an

extraordinary "pearl".

3. Care for his subjects and other which is a noble quality for a king.

4. Cherishable of good qualities.

> because they would lead to self - up rightness and authority. The integrity that a ruler possesses likens as his favorite dress. Temptations and Justness that are of baneful would never succeed in overpowering the ruler.
>
> (I Gusti Made Widia T.T: 313)

Thus, the ideal character of Rama has been ubiquitously employed in the story of Ramayana (Javanese version), in theatre - play, in sculptural works such as in Prambanan and Panataran.

**Mahabharata**

It is noted that *Mahabharata* also plays an important role in enriching the treasure of Javanese literature. The original *Mahabharata* epic had been transformed and adopted to the taste of Javanese, most of which had been written on palm leaves.

This epic appeared in many forms. This can be categorized in the following:

(a) In the form of Kekawin (Poetic) example:-

Arjuna wiwaha Kekawin
Krisnayana Kekawin
Sumanasantake Kekakin
Semaradahana Kekawin
Bhomakavia Kekawin
Bharatayuda Kekawin

(b) In prose form such as.
Adiparva
Sabhaparva
Wirataparva
Yudyoguparva

Bhisma parva
Ahsrama wasana parva
Mosala parva
Prasthanikaparva
Swarga rohana parva

(Poerbatjaraka 1975:163)

The works on *Mahabharata* exceeded the works on Ramayana, this was primarily because Javanese populace emphasized more on the philosophy of *Mahabharata* rather than that of Ramayana. It is noteworthy to mention that the characters found in *Mahabharata* are synonymous with Javanese heroes. It is for this reason we found that some episodes taken from *Mahabharata* have been expanded to represent another literary work of its own. This is evident in the personality of Arjuna in *Mahabharata* as portrayed in *Kekawin Arjunawiwaha* (Poerbatjaraka, 1975:16).

The epic of *Kekawin Arjunawiwaha* describes how the gods sought the help of the hero, Arjuna to eliminate the ruler by the name of Niwatakawaca. This work is basically taken from the third section of the text *Mahabharata*, better known as *Wanaparva*. The text was compiled by Mpu Kanwa during the reign of Prabu Airlangga (East Java, between 941-964 Caka/1019-1042 A.D.). Mpu Kanwa undertook the task of compiling Wanaparwa as a gesture of loyalty to the ruler Airlangga. The character of Airlangga was equated with Arjuna as found in *Kekawin Arjunawiwaha*. Historically, this episode coincides with the period, during the beginning of the weakening of the Sindhok dynasty. Airlangga who was then a young lad came to Java to attend a wedding ceremony. Airlangga managed to salvage the Sindhok dynasty from disintegration and reigned up to 1402AD. Mpu Kanwa specifically compiled the text for Airlangga notwithstanding that the name of Airlangga was never mentioned. This was evident in the introduction of *Kekawin Arjuna Wiwaha*:

> "Batin sang bijak sungguh telah tembus sampai ke tingkat (kesempurnaan) tertinggi. Dari keadaan sunyata (kosong) bukan dari kawasan panca indera, timbullah tekadnya mengabdikan diri (membuka diri) kepada urusan-urusan duniawi. Semoga amal

> baktinya yang penuh pahala serta tindakannya yang bersifat ksatriya, mencapai tujuannya. Daulat terhadap dirinya sendiri dan penuh ketenteraman batin (santosa) ia menerima keadaan ini, yakni tetap terpisah oleh tabir (maya) dan sebab abadi dunia ini".
>
> Ku letakkan puncak kepalaku pada debu sandal raja yang menampakkan diri dengan cara ini (oleh perbuatan dan keutamaannya). Ia merupakan sumber berkat yang tak pernah kering untuk menuangkan kemenangan Partha (Arjuna) di kediaman para dewa dalam bentuk sebuah syair".

(Zoetmulder, 1985:309)

The character of Arjuna in *Mahabharata* has been widely acknowledged as an ideal prominent figure of Pandawa. It is little wonder that we found the character of the ruler Airlangga who reigned East Java had similarities with that of Arjuna.

In the Javanese puppet plays i.e. shadow-plays (Pewayangan) the characters found in *Mahabharata* have been portrayed through symbolism.

> The Indonesian scholars on the other hand like to point to the moral lessons to be found in classical literary works. There is no doubt that such lessons are there: some texts, such as Javanese Walang niti or tutur, actually state the intention of their title while others contain passages of an unambiguously didactic nature.

(Robson, 1988:6)

"Pewayangan" in Javanese society are nothing but symbols in life and society. By understanding the nature and philosophy of wayang one can understand the meaning of life. (Mulyono. 1977:21). It is for this reason that every prominent

figure in Pendawa has been fully scrutinized etymologically and later adapted to suit the Javanese world-view.

Pandudewanta was the father of five Pandawa personalities namely Yudhistira, Bima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sadewa. "Pandudewanata" means "to look straight forward" which is synonymous with the term *pandu* (Ki Wahyu) Pratista. 1973:21). Thus the term *pandu,* means "to lead the way to truth" and not the contrary has profound significance in shaping the Javanese ethos.

Pandudewanata married two wives namely Devi Kunti and Madrim. With Devi Kunti he had three sons namely Yudhistira, Bima and Arjuna or Harjuna, and with Madrim, he had two sons viz: Nakula and Sadewa.

The character of Dewi Kunti symbolises triumphs of the spiritual over the worldly i.e. the flesh, in the human spiritual journey. Madrim in this respect portrays the notion of middle-path, the idea that balances spiritual and material aspects, as the term "madrim" itself denotes "earth". The third son, begotten from Kunti, portrays the idea of internal consciousness, while the remaining two represent the notion of the external aspect of man.

### d. The Character of Yudhistira

The personality of Yudhistira has its root from the term "Yudhi" which means "an expert in war" or "a warrior". "Isthira" gives the meaning, "spiritual assertiveness" in one's soul. In essence of the term Yudhisthira is to denote a warrior who always invoke God's help. The character of Yudhisthira therefore is to symbolize loyalty, and obedience to the almighty God. It is for this reason, in Javanese society, it has been said that Yudhisthira had white blood in his body to signify sacredness.

In the shadow-play this character of Yudhisthira is better known as Dharma Kusuma, Dharma Raja, Dharma Putera and Punta Dewa or god's arrow. Yudhisthira's presence is often attributed to the sacredness of the gods (dewa) manifested in the conscious mind of a human being.

In the mind of the general Javanese populace, Yudhisthira has been regarded as the one who possesses supernatural weapon in the form of a book known as *Kalimasuda Pustaka Jamus*.

| | |
|---|---|
| Kalima : | five brothers |
| Usuda : | healing (effort towards healing) |
| Pustaka Jamus : | sacred (holy) book |

As a whole this idea of sacred book gives the meaning, "five ways to truth" or successful life (Ki Wahyu Pratista, 1973:25). The five ways to successful life as understood by Javanese society are as follows:

1) Personifying the meaning of the unity of God.
2) Worshipping
3) Controlling distress and passion
4) Budi Dharma
5) Good behaviour

When the above-mentioned five ways to success as a whole have been overcome, then there would come eternal happiness. These were the five ways that the Pandawa brothers followed until they succeeded in fighting Korawa in Kurukshetra war. The victory over Korawa is regarded as the feat of happiness.

To the Javanese mind, victory would always come by as long as there is no conflict of interest between one's conscience with that of the Almighty. In other words self-restraint is essential as lust and passions left uncontrolled are likened to wild horses that ran amok.

### e. The Personality of Bhima

This personality of Bhima is often portrayed in the works of Javanese classic as a supernatural being. He was born wrapped in a cocoon much earlier than his brother Yudhistira. The cocoon symbolizes an eternal life. Happy life can

only be gotten and realized when all illusion and wishful thinking are discarded.

In Javanese literature, the personality of Bhima is also known as Werkudara. "Werku" means "jungle dog" and "udara" means stomach. This is to denote the stomach of jungle dog which is constantly hunger and would devour anything that comes-by. To the Javanese mind, Bhima symbolizes wishful thinking or day-dreaming and greediness.

The efficacy of Bhima in the form of a dream was also found in all his three sons namely Gatotkaca, Antareja and Antasena. Gatotkaca has supernatural power, whereby he could fly penetrating the other space. The prowess of Gatotkaca was very much admired and later become the emblem, by the Indonesian Air Force (Marbangun Hardjawirogo 1984:33). Antaraja had succeeded in penetrating the earth, while Antasena, could walk on water. This state of affair mirrors the human mind which could reach and penetrate even into earth, air and other space.

Bhima also is said to have owned a weapon known as gadha Rujak Polo. "Polo" literary means brain, thus quite related to the wishful thinking of human being, without it, man would never think.

Aside from the above, Bhima was also associated with the four - colour attire that he used. The colours were red, white, yellow and black. These four colours have their own separate meanings corresponding to characteristics such as anger, greed, sacrifice, patience, contentedness and honesty. The last four qualities of good behaviour would free man from the yoke of lust and beastial greed.

### f. Arjuna/Harjuna

The personality of Arjuna or Harjuna plays an important role in the **Mahabharata** epic, because only through it could victory be coveted by the Pandawa. In Javanese literature, this personality

of Arjuna is popularly known as Harjuna, literally meaning water in a container. "Water" in the Javanese spiritual world symbolizes life. Man cannot live without water, and the latter is indispensable to human life.

The status of Arjuna/Harjuna, placed third in the sibling of five, symbolizes the pivot or the focal point. Thus amongst the Bali society it is known as *Pamade* (the centre). It is popularly known that Arjuna is regarded as the most authoritative in the stories of *Mahabharata*. Therefore, he is also known as *Begawan cipta Ning* and *Lananging Jagad.*

As regards Begawan Cipta Ning, the expression carries the meaning "pure creation" that is a creation devoid of pollution (materialistic). The same personality appeared in the same story bearing the same title in which war was waged against Niwata Kawaca in winning back princess Suprata. The term "Suprata" also embodies the meaning `light that shines'. Taken as a whole, war between Arjuna and Niwata Kawaca to get back Princess Supraba can be interpreted as a mean or endeavor to cleanse his soul from worldly matters, thus to bring about light that could guide man to a successful life. The epithet Lananging Jagad, for Arjuna is related to the gentleness of Arjuna's behavior and temperament which has become the source of dream for every lass. Even to this time, when referring to a prowess young man, the name Arjuna is mentioned.

## g. The Personality of Nakula and Sadewa

Both were twins of Pandudewanata and Madrim. "Madrim" literally means "earth"' to denote *mutter* (mother), motherland. Both the personalities reflect cooperation or rather conciliation between wishful thinking and concrete ideas. This notion of cooperation could be gleaned from man's five senses namely, a pair of eyes for seeing, a pair and ears for hearing, a pair of nostrils for ordouring, tongue for

tasting and skin for sensing. Through these five senses man will be able to know, both the observable and the unobservabie world. This ability to know is further explained by the name "Na" to denote `existence' and "Kula" to denote 'creation'. Thus, "Nakula" means the existence of man (creation) (Ki Wahyu Pratista: 1973:35). In the same vein, the five senses, spiritually will be able to understand the hidden or unobservable. The ability to understand this reality conforms with the ability of gods to know as also acknowledged by *Sadewa* who merits the status of god. In summary, the five personalities of the Pandawa found in *Mahabharata* symbolize the esoteric aspect of man's worldly life. To the mind of the Javanese, sound literature is measured by the quality of the message put across by the writer. This state of affair has similarities with that of *Pagelaran Wayang Purwa*, a projection of images. To be able to see the object in real, the veil should be uncovered. In the same spirit, one could understand Javanese literature by studying the mind of the Javanese society. Thus in Javanese literature: one should not only look at the roles played by the hero, rather one should know the philosophy behind why those heroes were created in the play.

**Conclusion**

By looking at the heroes in the classical Javanese Literature, one notice that the physical aspects of the heroes are always being emphasized as perfect human beings. To the Javanese populace, these heroes are interpreted according to the Javanese world-view even for the character of Rama in the Ramayana and the Pandawas in *Mahabharata*. Even after the coming of Islamic and western influences that these heroes are still being interpreted according to the Hindu Javanese perspective. To the Javanese minds, these heroes represent their ideal man whom they look for.

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# Research Project Of Rama-drama in Thailand

**Title of the Study:** The title of the study is 'Critical analysis of Rama-drama in Th

**Importance of the subject:**

Amazing though it seems that the enactment of Rama-drama repr great values of glorious tradition and culture has been, slowly and slowly, wither from India, the land of its origin while it is still popular and prosperous in foreign including Burma, Thailand, Combodia, Laos, Malaysia and Indonesia and there evidence of its existence in Mangolia and Japan in ancient time. Moreover, i properly protected by the governments of some South-east Asian counties, p Thailand and often presented at the time of welcoming state guests. Obvious! drama in Thailand' is a very important subject which has not been properly ap up till now by any Indian even after more than half a century of our democrat towards national uplift and glorification. It needs proper appreciation and systen to protect and glorify our great national heritage.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES FEBRUARY 11, 1995

# In the name of Ram

## SUNIL KOTHARI on the 11th International Ramayana Conference which was held in Bangkok some time back

A classical masked knon dancer drama

GYPSY. That is what Shyamananda Jalan, my friend, renowned director of Hindi theatre and a brilliant solicitor, lawyer, catalyst to several international theatre and dance conferences in Calcutta, calls me.

Yes, I am a gypsy, have wheels on my heels and have started living out of suitcases in and out of guest houses, hotels and travelling constantly feasting my eyes on dance forms of the Far East — Bangkok, Cambodia and at home in Calicut, Kuchipudi village, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and what have you.

1995 offers a wide variety of choices not only for travels but also for writing — dance and travelogue. And that is what I and inspirer Lallan Prasad Vyas, Professor A. C. Bose from Jammu, Sheikh Mansoor Ahmed, special correspondent from UNI, from Lucknow the ace photographer Ashok Khanna, whose absolutely captivating photographs of Ramlila of Banaras and Ram Nagar held all the delegates spell bound, and several other scholars and authorities on the Ramayana, the foremost amongst them from Delhi University, Professor Satyavrat Shastri, whose original work in Sanskrit on Ramayana has received university appreciation, Professor Smt Indira Goswamy also from the same University, a brilliant writer of short stories in Assamese language all adorned the conference along

Temple spires on the Bangkok skyline

notorious for the flesh trade, with its sleazy bars, 'traditional massage parlours', night clubs, street walkers, and streets ablaze with thousands of tiny bulbs for the celebration of the birthday of the King, Bangkok is the biggest tourist and trade centre. The temples were lit up imaginatively turning the city into **Suvarnabhumi,** a city of gold. The tall spires, the typical architecture, the roof, the Garuda bird, exquisitely woven flower garlands, a real thing of beauty, artistically laid out vegetables, roadside eateries with mouth watering and hot Thai curries and other delicacies, all are unforgettable sights of Bangkok.

THE visit to the Wat Po temple where a 46 metres long and 15 metres high reclining Buddha image is housed, symbolising its position as an access to *Nirvana*, is *de rigour*. The Golden Mountain, the highest point in Bangkok is only 80 metres high. The capital's skyline is now dominated by modern high rise buildings coming up at a frenetic speed. The hotels do a booming business. Behind the crenellated ramparts rise the temple spires and varnished roofs, decorated

...ana conference at Bang- ...d me to other parts of ...d and then to Cambodia. ... the stupendous Angkor ...Angkor Thom temples. ...rs, absolute wonders. ...e murals on the walls of ...laces in Bangkok and ... Penh. What a wealth. No ...r Dr Kapila Vatsyayan ... eloquent: "Ramayana, ...eat epic created out of ex...ce of compassion (*karuna*) ...being of a poet, and from it ...ed the grand narrative of a ...f God on earth. It de-

...London, South Africa, Indonesia and other far off places.

It was at times like the tower of Babel, people speaking in several languages, but the common language was English.

Several insights were shared by the delegates during the deliberations emphasising the unique role this priceless epic continues to play in creating an awareness of universal harmony and the need for maintaining *dharma* in today's troubled times. The ramifications found in several languages and traditions across the vast geographic-

...of dancers, the inimitable Bala Gopal whose role of Hanumana appears to be irreplaceable in Rukmini Devi's Ramayana series. A large turnout of the audience at the spacious auditorium of Thammasat University where the India Studies Centre under Professor Ms Srisuranga is flourishing with her single-minded devotion. She is in her late fifties and has impeccable taste, wears sober, but eye-catching fashionable dresses like attractive Thai women. Sophisticated, soft spoken and extremely efficient.

But all studies and no games would have made our stay in Bangkok very dull. Of course

der how the landgrabbing mafias work the same way all over the world. Near the National Theatre, two gigantic high rise towers have come up defying all rules of the Government and are an eyesore. Andre Malraux the Cultural Minister of France had seen to it that the skyline of Paris was not overshadowed by the new modern architecture. He has shown remarkable sensitivity, which the greedy mafias of France seem to have honoured. We do not fare any luck in India. The less said the better about our honouring the sense of architecture. One has to only look around for the visual atrocities we commit at home.

**"Several insights were shared by the delegates during the deliberations emphasising the unique role this priceless epic continues to play in creating an awareness of universal harmony and the need for maintaining *dharma* in today's troubled times"**

...oped into a mighty spectacle ...life in its dimension of private ...ve and public duty, action and ...nunciation, the joy and story ... power and fortitude of banish...ent. The epic more than any ...her single literary creation, has ...rmeated every nook and cor...r of the land of its creation, ...d travelled into other lands far ...d near, for the kernel of story ...capable of retaining a univer...lity and yet adapting and mod...ving itself into local traditions, ...rcumstances and genius. Little ...onder that for over 2000 years ...e Rama theme has fascinated ...nd inspired poets, writers, ...culptors, painters, musicians, ...ancers, puppeteers and ballad ...ngers, over a vast geographical ...rea from Mongolia, Central ...Asia and Turkey to China, ...apan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri ...Lanka and of course Nepal, ...Thailand, Burma, Laos and ...Cambodia."

THE Conference was held from 15 to 18 December at Bangkok in the Thammasat University. The largest contingent of the participants was from India. Sushmita Banerjee, a young Kathak dancer, a disciple of Vijai Shankar and Birju Maharaj had accompanied me to illustrate some episodes in Kathak from Tulsidasa's **Sriramacharitamanasa.** Author, writer Dr Induja Awasthi, dancer, writer, photographer, painter, Komala Varadan, the organiser of this unique conference world over

al areas, were not only fascinating but also inspiring. The presentation of the Ramayana story in the dance-drama tradition of the masked variety known as *Khon* of Thailand was spectacular and breathtaking. *Sushmita was lucky to share the same platform of the National Theatre at Bangkok as was I for my brief discourse on the topic of Ramayana in the performing arts, specially in the classical dance forms.*

FROM Kalakshetra, Madras, the troupe had come to present **Choodamanipradanam** dance-drama choreographed by late Rukmini Devi, based on Valmiki's Sanskrit version of the Ramayana. Professor Chirapat Prapannavidya of Silpakorn University and Professor Ms Srisurang Poolthupya, the main organiser of the conference at Bangkok were pleasantly surprised to learn about so many different versions of the Ramayana and the episodes. Being a Sanskrit scholar Professor Chirapat Prapannvidya was able to follow my running commentary during the unfolding of **Choodamanipradanam.** I have seen the dance-drama in the sylvan settings of Kalakshetra several times along with Rukmini Devi and marvelled at her genius of choreographing such an absorbing epic. It was a great pleasure to spend time with Rajaram, the principal of Kalakshetra, Kamalarani, lead singer,

THE HINDUST...

*Husain's simple and elegant works*

# Back to the ...

**UMA NAIR on the Husain-D... Ahmedabad where art and arch... wedlock — M. F. Husain's art a... Doshi's architectur...**

# Research Project Of Rama-drama in Thailand

**Title of the Study:** The title of the study is 'Critical analysis of Rama-drama in Thailand'

**Importance of the subject:**

Amazing though it seems that the enactment of Rama-drama representing great values of glorious tradition and culture has been, slowly and slowly, withering away from India, the land of its origin while it is still popular and prosperous in foreign countries including Burma, Thailand, Combodia, Laos, Malaysia and Indonesia and there is historic evidence of its existence in Mangolia and Japan in ancient time. Moreover, it is being properly protected by the governments of some South-east Asian counties, particularly Thailand and often presented at the time of welcoming state guests. Obviously, 'Rama-drama in Thailand' is a very important subject which has not been properly appreciated up till now by any Indian even after more than half a century of our democratic journey towards national uplift and glorification. It needs proper appreciation and systematic study to protect and glorify our great national heritage.

**Aim and object of the study:**

The chief object of the study is to enhance the glory of India and to co-ordinate national awakening. It is very significant to mention here that Thailand being Buddhist in faith is emotionally and intimately related to Ramayanic culture. It is almost apparent from its great tradition that its ancient capital was Ayuthiya (Ayodhya), its present king is Rama IX and its royal chapel contains 152 bas-reliefs depicting Ramyanic theme. It will, therefore, assist in promoting close cultural relation with Thailand which may, finally, culminate in creating broader Socio-economic and political relation providing a solid base for further expansion of our study in the Mekong Valley.

*Area of Study:*

Rama-drama presently exists in two different forms in Thailand i.e., shadow play and masked drama. The present work endeavours to present a detailed study of the masked drama enacting Ramayanic episodes in Thailand.

*Research device:*

The method and technique to be adopted in the process of research in collecting materials for their studies will be as follows:

(i) For collecting primary data sample survey and interview methods will be applied.

(ii) Library reference will be assembled for secondary data.

(iii) After verification of the collected materials proper classification, comparison, analysis and evaluation will be done. Finally, reasonable conclusion will be drawn and presented which may uncover new dimensions of research and function as back ground of future studies.

*Out line of the work*

## *A detailed synopsis of the work:*

### *Chapter-I*

The first chapter of the work functioning as an introduction of the study will introduce historical back ground of the treatise. It will present the origin and development of Rama-drama in South-east Asia.

The earliest reference of Rama-drama which captivated the inhabitants of South-east Asia for centuries as the chief source of their joy and entertainment is traced back to early tenth century from Java. One of the inscriptions of Balitung dated dated 907 A.D. discloses the performance of Ramayana-play before the **King**[1]. The historic evidence of the Thai shadow play displaying Ramayana is to be found in the Palatine law of Thai King Boromtrai Loknath enacted in 1458 **A.D**[2].

In Burma, Rama-drama was brought from Thailand. The Burmese King Hsin-bu-shin defeated Siam in 1767 A.D. and among things brought from the enemy's capital Ayuthia was a troop of actors enacting Rama-drama in **Siam**[3] The present study will investigate all the available sources of history to deal with the origin and development of Rama-drama in South-east Asia. The study will also make endeavours to search the origin of its source in India and its journey to South-east Asian countries and how it reached Japan and Mangolia.

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2. Singarvelu, S: The Ramayana in South-east Asia P.23, Thai cultural Tradition, The Ramayana in South-east Asia, Gaya, 1981, N.4,P.33, Raghvan, V:The Ramayana in Greater India, Surat, 1973, P.140.
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***Chapter-2***

The second Chapter of the work depicts the nature and form of Rama-drama in Thailand. The Rama-drama as it is performed in Thailand consists of two different forms: shadow play and masked drama. The shadow theatre employs skin puppets of two styles,One using large and composite puppets and other utilising smaller, single character puppets. But, this work is particularly concerned with masked drama. The masked theatre enacting Rama-drama in Thailand is known as 'Khon' (masked play) a classical form of Siamese drama presenting episodes from the 'Ramkien', the Thai Ramayana primarily based on the Ramayana of Valmiki. Since the introduction of the 'Ramayana' Siamese poets of almost every period have composed several dramatized versions of the story. In that process, the story has acquired many additions and undergone alterations which make it different from its Indian **original**[1]. Interestingly Thai recentions adorns and beautify the Ramayanic theme of Indian additions in its different versions.

Rama-drama is performed on the occasion of coronations, important cremations, festivals, ceremonies, marriages and ordinations by the Siamese people. It is treated as national drama in Thailand and it is enacted on the occasion of welcoming government guests from foreign **countries**[2].

It is significant to mention here that Rama-drama in Thailand is properly protected by the Department of Education while in India it is unprotected and moving to-wards decay.

1. Yupho, Dhanit, 'The Khon and Lakon' The Department of Fine Arts, Bankok, Thailand, 1963, PP 4-5
2. Chamlong, Sarpadnuke; Ramayana in Thai Theatre, The Ramayana Tradition in Asia, P.23

**Chapter-3:**

The third chapter of the work will provide the descriptions of stage, mask and costume. The stage will include not only the platform used for dramatic performance, but it will also explain curtains, sceneries, green room, light management, orchestra area and sitting arrangement for the spectators.

Masks having different form and colours occupy very important and respectful position in Rama-drama. In some countries masks are worshiped before the commencement of the drama. Moreover, the colours of the masks and the tradition of wearing them by actors performing different roles varies from country to country. The work will furnish all the details regarding masks.

The actors and actress performing various roles in Rama-drama in Thailand wear different types of ornaments and dresses. There is long schedule of ornaments and costumes used in Rama-drama in Thailand. The work will produce a list of ornaments and costumes worn by different actors and actresses in the drama.

**Chapter-4:**

The fourth chapter will describe the characters alongwith actors performing different roles in the drama. Characters of Rama-drama in Thailand, in accordance with their nature, include gods, sages, human and non-human beings like monkeys, demons etc. Comic characters are very rare in Indian drama enacting Ramayana play, while it holds significant position in South-east Asia particularly in Burma where spectators have strong aptitude for comic element. There are some extra characters in Rama-drama in Thailand. This work will deal with all types of characters of Rama-drama staged in Thailand.

The description of actors will include not only actors, but also actress, comedians, spokesmen, play back singers etc. It is significant to mention here that in Thailand originally all the actors except buffoons and those who impersonate women wear masks. More over, the actors, often, do not sing or speak their dialogues which are generally relayed by others.

**Chapter-5:**

The fifth Chapter will present the study of the episodes and dialogues of Rama-drama in Thailand. The play always presents some episodes of Ramayana which, generally, include killing of the crow-demon (kakanasun), the giant magician of the lower world (Mayrab), a floating lady playing the role of dead Sita, the serpent noose, the fire ordeal etc. The study will comprise all important episodes of the drama particularly those varying from the Indian original. Endeavours will be made to study the style of the dialogue and in this regard some significant dialogues may be translated as specimen. Moreover, if the fund provides slides of all important episodes can be prepared for further utilization and study.

**Chapter 6:**

The sixth chapter will deal with song and dance employed in the drama. Thai Ramayanic dance is very difficult, the movement of feet and the trunk of the actors impersonating orges and monkeys were originally adopted from those of the fencers and persons who hold up the leather figures while staging the Siamese shadow play[1] In this respect, some important songs will be collected and translated. Moreover, it will also study gestures and postures of the dances and their pictures will be enclosed with the work.

1. Kromamum, H.H. Prince Dhaninivat, Bidyalabh Bridhya Korn No. 3, Thai Culture, New Series

**Chapter 7:**

The seventh chapter will produce the descriptions of orchestra and music. Ram-drama in Thailand makes use of song and music, both vocal and instrumental borrowed from the drama of the 'Lakon Nai' type. It will delineate all musical instruments employed in the performance of the drama. It will present a list of the musical instruments including their pictures and special attention will be paid to rhythmic peculiarities of the music.

**Chapter 8:**

The last chapter will evaluate all the important aspects of the drama to unveil new dimension and scope for further study in this field. The work will, finally, conclude with presenting great values and philosophies functioning as under current in the long tradition of Rama-drama abroad.

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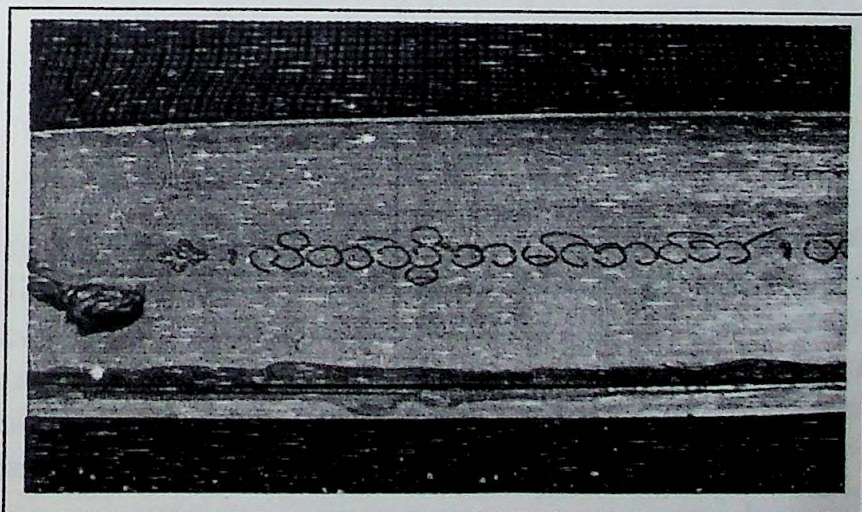
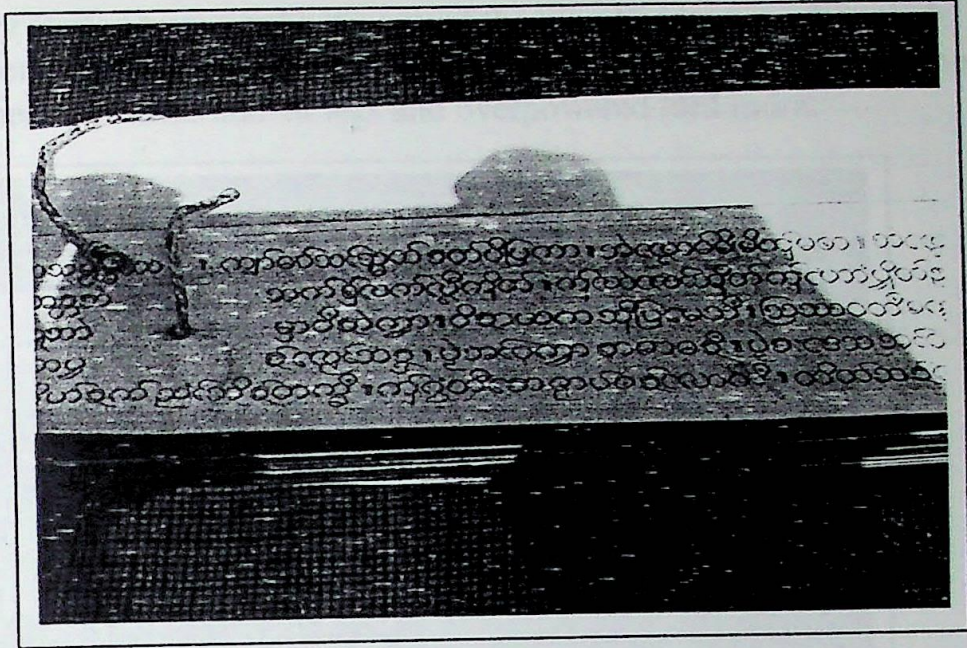
# Samin Rem palm leave manuscript
# (Ramayana in Mon Language)

Asst.Dr.Bumroong Kham-ek

Someone said that in the past Mon people they were artists and created many old monumental buildings such as Pagoda, Buddha statues, ect.in Southeast Asia as we known in the time of Davaravati , they were not only expert in art but in literatures also like their works appeared in the inscritptions.

In 17 century B.C. period Funan empire was settled in the region of Khong river on the low part after Indian civilization influenced on it by trader. In the Chinese History; Liang Dynasty enumerated the small five states named "dhunzun" they were dependency of Funan empire between the bay of Bengol and Thai. The word "Dhunzun" may come from "Dunmazun" the old Mon language. It is similar to "Derng Meson" in modern Mon Langage. (Gillion 1999 : 70)

From this point, It is possible Dhunzun began Mon sivilization and impacted to another countries in Southeast Asia. I as a Mon people who worried about Mon palm leave inscriptions which were written about 200 -100 years and available in Mon temples, but nobody can read and understand the old words . Prof.Dr. Su-ed Gajaseni a physician of Siriraj Hospital, Bangkok, who collected and preserved them. I as his assistant want to do a research on the title "adverb and adverbial phrase in Mon" which are very very useful for writing Mon poetry and giving a speech, Meanwhile I have found three volumes of Mon Ramayana. Prof. Dr. Su-ed he said hearsay Mon poet usually are monks copied from Thai Ramayana, After having read the first volume, I got much knowledge, such as style of writing , plot , part of story, languages
Mon Ramayana belong to palm leave inscription named

"Smin Ram"it means "Lord Ram" the date of composition 2377 B.E the main of the story may come from many places and mixed with folk culture and tale.There are three volumes, the number of pages about 185 Ven.Sukhara.who was a Buddhist monk and writer.The poet wrote in verses which are different from Thai style, see for example

There are eigth syllables in a line with the symbol of full stop

We can have a notice that the word which rimes with another word sometime it is different sound but similar form such as :-

ညာတ်ညးဗက်အဴဗုၚ်ပြေသေၚ်ဟာ //
ညာတ်ဇလပ္လန်စောန်မံၚ်သေၚ်ဟာ //

Yat yeh bok ou pueng prey sengha
Yat chele plon con mong sengha

We can see the words on the line are same spelling but different sound (first line), sometime a little different in spelling (second line) belongs to an accented syllable and unaccented syllable (Guru and laghu)
In a tradition of writing, the poet first worships the Triple Gems(Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha as a refuge of Buddhist), parents, teachers and then lord Indra, Brahma, Yama, Chandra, Aditya, Varuna, Marut,Vishnu,

Parmeshvara and their consorts Sarasvati etc. The poet who was a Buddhist monk ,honored The Buddha, grateful persons and gods who were invoked in this story gave a blessing him to get success in his work. In Mon Ramayana was not divided into Khanda(chapters), but in first volume was about the birth of Ram Tossakri, Bali, Sugriva, Sita may be we can definite in Bala Khand

The story started from Lanka the city of the king Biddraram who ruled Lanka got four children, the elder was Tossakri(Ravana,Thosakand) who had 10 heads 20 arms and 20 legs and overpowered lord Indra.

Ramayan of Tamil with the picture of Ravana

Second Iddhidhana(Kumbhakand) who had a big and tall body with a great power. Third Bhebherk who knew three Vedas and became astrologist(Purohit) had a wife Krisda(Trijada) with a daughter Subhannaka or Suwannajata, Indra's consort that one day Tossakri with the power changed the form of a house lizard and became amorous with her, on her unwilling and killed by lord Indra by cutting the body into two parts as her asking, one kept in heaven and onother in Lanka ,fourth a daughter Samgobhot(Surpanakha)
The consequence of misdeed of Tossakri, Indra come to Bhodhisatva as a supreme lord in the heaven and asked for his incarnation for getting rid of Tossakri. The Boddhisatva included Indra with all gods incanated in Tavaravati city.

<u>Davaravati City</u>

The Bodhisatva became a son of a great king Piliyakkha (dasharath, Dhosaroth) with four queens, Candadevi, Candadeva, Sauvandevi and Ruppadevi. The Boddhisatva was born in the womb of Candadevi. Four sons were born from four queens prince Ram, Lakkhana, Jatasatru and Rotta.After being born of four sons, king Tossarotta got serious sick cause off being injured by a thorn after his traveling from the park.

Birth of Bali and Sugriva

(Mainwhile a king Sesa got a very beautiful daughter Gangadevi, consort of lord Surya got a son then became Chandra's consort got a son and a daughter) A seer was in the forest for long time until grasses and creepers grew over him until couple of birds built there nets in the long moustache and beard and then he became a layman got a marriage and got a beutiful daughter Svaha, after regonizing suffering of the world he became seer again and was in the forest for longtime, then a great seer thought of his family and then became layman came to his palace and met with Ganga devi his queen. He had a daughter in the past but did not khow she got two sons and but he love as his children, but a cause of making a vow to prove who was his real sons, then a girl became his real daughter and two sons were brought by the storm to the forest and became monkeys named Bali and Serngharit (Sugriva)

Birth of Padmadevi(Mondothri)

A seer was in the forest of Himalaya. One day the seer went to the forest for bringing the lotus then he met a beautiful girl under the lotus leave so she was called Padmadevi.Two brothers Bali and Serngharit want to learn with the seer and came to him. Bali met Padmadevi and both loved each other secretly then Padmadevi was pregnant and got a son Later. Tossakri came to seer's Ashram met Padmadevi and falled in love her brought her to Lanka.

Birth of Soite (Sida,Sita)

Padmadevi became a queen and got a daughter. According to prediction of Bhibhek, her daughter must be thrown away in the river by putting in the pot, a seer saw her and brought up from the river then keep her in the earh with a box for long time, then he could not remember the place where he put in the earth. He plowed here and there, after that he met her and gave her name Soite(Sida, Sita). Samin Rem and Lakhna came to the seer to raise the a bow and met Sita.

From the study of Ramayana of Mon, I find the old culture of Mon as a younger person goes to the elder has to sit below.and joins with hands to

pay respect. Ram sit on Mon style by raise a side of knee and then joins hands called "Kbongthokalai" and the time of celebrating coming of Padmadevi to Lanka. Tossakri welcomed with offering along Mon culture called "Bagama" this ceremony usually did when celebrating on birthday, becoming a monk etc. we can see the culture of Mon's food on the celebrating of coming back of Samin Rem to Dvaravati with Soite. In the party there are many food cooked from fishes like "ka-kdot" in Thai "Pla-mho" that is Mon food. About Sanskrit words I have given my paper on the last conference.

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# आधुनिक विश्व में रामायण की प्रासंगिकता

□ विद्या सागर आनंद (ब्रिटेन)

आज के विश्व में दूरियां महत्त्वहीन हो गई हैं। विमान-सेवाओं ने विश्व को एक अंतर्राष्ट्रीय गांव बना दिया है। दूर-दराज के देशों, वहां के लोगों को जानने के लिए हमें महीनों लंबी यात्राएं नहीं करनी पड़तीं। कम्प्यूटर, फैक्स-मशीन, उपग्रह टी.वी. और दूरसंचार के अन्य माध्यमों ने दूरियां मिटा दी हैं। लेकिन क्या हम आध्यात्मिक और नैतिक दृष्टि से भी एक-दूसरे के निकट आ सके हैं ? सच तो यह है कि अपार संपत्ति तथा अपूर्व तकनीकी और वैज्ञानिक प्रगति के बावजूद विश्व में आध्यात्मिकता की दृष्टि से बेहद निर्धनता है। आज का विश्व मदिरा, बलात्कार, हिंसा, मादक पदार्थों और नैतिक मूल्यों के पतन में डूबा हुआ है। विशेषतः भौतिक दृष्टि से विकसित पाश्चात्य जगत में घोर असंतोष व्याप्त है। उसे एक ऐसे दार्शनिक पारस पत्थर की तलाश है, जिससे मानसिक शांति और संतोष प्राप्त हो और जो उसे आध्यात्मिक और सांस्कृतिक विकास का उत्कर्ष प्रदान कर सके।

लंदन में बसे एक विश्व नागरिक के रूप में मैंने, अपने विश्व-भ्रमण के दौरान अतिवादी, उच्छृंखल, दिशाहीन भौतिकता के दुष्परिणामों को देखा है। यह मेरा सौभाग्य है कि मैं उस देश (भारत) का मूल निवासी हूँ, जिसने हजारों वर्ष पूर्व भौतिकता की अति की चुनौतियों का सामना किया। लेकिन उसी देश में उससे भी पूर्व संतों, दार्शनिकों और ऋषियों की एक ऐसी परंपरा भी थी, जिसने भौतिक प्रगति से उत्पन्न होने वाली समस्याओं का पूर्वानुमान लगा लिया था। इन प्राज्ञ पुरुषों ने प्रगति में छिपी विनाश की संभावनाओं को जानकर धन की उपासना के गंभीर दुष्प्रभावों के प्रति हमें बहुत पहले ही सचेत कर दिया था। उन्होंने बताया था कि इससे हम पाप, कष्ट तथा बुद्धि और चरित्र की दुर्बलताओं से ग्रसित होते जाएंगे।

हमारे प्राचीन विद्वानों ने इस विषय पर अनेक ग्रंथों की रचना की है। किन्तु उन सब ग्रंथों के बीच रामायण ही एक ऐसा ग्रंथ है जो बड़े प्रभावपूर्ण सुस्पष्ट, कवित्वमय तथा व्यावहारिक ढंग से विनाश के कगार पर खड़ी मानवता के सम्मुख उन शाश्वत सत्यों को उजागर करता है, जो उसके अस्तित्व की रक्षा के लिए परमावश्यक हैं। यह ग्रंथ

# How many Ramayanas can you fit into a museum?

TO NAME AND ADDRESS

AMULYA GOPALAKRISHNAN

When the Centre announced a Rs 225-crore Ramayana museum in Ayodhya, right ahead of the Uttar Pradesh election, of course it was accused of exploiting religious feelings for political use. And of course the culture ministry played innocent, saying it was only being thoughtful about tourists. Meanwhile, UP's SP government promptly announced a Ram Leela park by the Sarayu, to neutralise any advantage.

Set aside the question of whether the state should fund such a museum; imagine what this museum would look like. What kind of Ramayana would it seek to hold within its walls?

It's hard enough to pin down what the Ramayana is. It has long been locked in combat with itself. It is a literary achievement, it is also a fount of heartfelt faith. It has been used as a tool of power, but also to assert difference. It is a stern tale of dharma, but also holds out intriguing, complicated human stories.

**SELFIES WITH RAMA:** For centuries, storytellers have celebrated the Ramayana, editing and embellishing it

It makes sense that the BJP, a party that rode to power on the back of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, would like to gently remind voters about its own fundamentals. Through the late '80s, the Sangh Parivar emphasised Rama's ferocious warrior aspect, cast India as Hindu-first with "Ram ki bhakti hi rashtra ki shakti hai", insisted on literally grounding their faith in Ayodhya, battling "Babar ki santaan".

But the Sangh and the BJP were not the first to make a political instrument of the Ramayana. They are tapping into an old wellspring. Sanskrit scholar Sheldon Pollock has suggested, studying architectural and inscription evidence, that temple worship of Rama was a post-12th-century phenomenon, sharpened by the encounter with the Central Asian Ghaznavids, Ghurids and Khiljis. In his telling, the Ramayana was especially ripe for political use, because of its model of divine kingship and the demonisation of the Other.

Dynasties across India seized upon the epic, bending it to their ends. Through the Ramayana story, a king could assert the righteousness of his rule (the claims of younger brothers have no place in this ideal, for instance, as the stories of Bharata and Vali tell us). Ravana and his clan, portrayed as wife-stealing moral deviants, and a separate race at that, are enemies to be destroyed without mercy. You can see why Valmiki's epic, in its stark ethical lines, would appeal to royal houses.

The Ramayana, though, has refused to be marshalled in this manner alone. Through the centuries, bards and storytellers across India and southeast Asia have celebrated the Ramayana, edited and embellished it, subtly shifted focus.

The Kamba Ramayanam is infused with Tamil ideals and metaphors, Santhal tellings reflect their views on chastity, Ezhuthachan remade it for Kerala. Ayodhya, the actual Uttar Pradesh town, is distant from that consciousness. In the Thai version, Ravana's unrequited passion and pride are sympathetically described, and his fall evokes pity. The Jain telling is almost a counter-narrative, with an enlightened human Rama who leaves the killing to Lakshmana. It also rationalises flights of fancy, like Ravana's ten heads.

As Nabaneeta Dev Sen writes, women's tellings, like those of Chandrabati, Molla and Ranganayakamma, linger on Sita's birth, wedding, abduction and abandonment, not the details of the war. In many treatments, Tara, Ahalya and Mandodari are drawn with acute psychological subtlety. The Ramayana has been a medium for resistance too, like the Ramnamis of Chhattisgarh who tattooed Rama's name on their bodies to assert caste equality.

It is hard to imagine the limits of a Ramayana museum, given the rushing waterfall of poetry, painting, textile, sculpture, folk songs, dance, drama, puppetry, movies, TV shows and graphic novels that have sprung from the epic. It animates salty proverbs, it is the stuff of children's make-believe.

Granted, some of us are unable to wipe away Arun Govil's face from our minds — but the Ramayana and its traces suffuse this culture. You don't even remember when it was first told to you; as A K Ramanujan put it, it is an "always-already" story for many Hindus. So what will Mahesh Sharma's Ramayana museum tell us that we don't already know?

Museums are storytelling exercises. A Sangh-style Ramayana museum would choose some objects and narratives, presumably about good and evil and idealised political orders; a Sahmat-style exhibition would choose bhakti, social emancipation and plurality. A Gandhian Ramayana museum would etch another moral picture.

The Ramayana museum will fix the story in place, set it in concrete and stone. But there will still be many stubborn, teeming Ramayanas outside the museum.



TOI 23.10.2016

# जटायु, सम्पाति एवं सुपार्श्व का त्याग

सत्यव्रत शास्त्री

अंगद के नेतृत्व में श्री हनुमान, जाम्बवान, गज, गवाक्ष, गवय, शरभ, गन्धामादन, मैन्द, द्विविद आदि वानर सुग्रीव के आदेशानुसार दक्षिण दिशा में श्रीसीताजी की खोज पर चल पड़े। मार्ग में एक गुफा दिखी। समस्त वानर भूख प्यास से व्याकुल थे अतः उस गुफा में प्रवेश कर गये। यह गुफा माया विशारद महातेजस्वी दानव शिरोमणि मयासुर ने बनाई थी। इस गुफा को हेमा अप्सरा ने जो कि मयासुर के सम्पर्क में आई थी, अपनी प्रिय सखी स्वयंप्रभा को दे दिया था। स्वयंप्रभा ने इन वानरों को शुद्ध भोजन और फलमूल आहार हेतु दिये। शुद्ध जल से तीव्र प्यास शान्त की–

*मयस्य मायाविहितं गिरिदुर्गं विचिन्वताम्।*
*तेषां मासो व्यतिक्रान्तों यो राज्ञा समयः कृतः।।*

*श्री वा. रा. किष्किन्धाकाण्ड सर्ग 53-2*

इस दुर्गम गुफा में सीताजी की खोज करते हुए इन वानरों को एक मास व्यतीत हो गया, जिसे वानराज सुग्रीव ने लौटने का समय निश्चित किया था। निर्धारित एक मास समयावधि पूर्ण हो जाने पर अंगद अत्यन्त दुःखी हो गये तथा कहा–

*अहं वः प्रतिजानामि न गमिष्याम्यहं पुरीम्।*
*इहैव प्रायमासिष्ये श्रेयो मरणमेव मे।।*

*श्री वा.रा. किष्किन्धाकाण्ड सर्ग 55-12*

मैं आप लोगों से प्रतिज्ञापूर्वक कहता हूँ कि मैं किष्किन्धापुरी नहीं जाऊँगा। यहीं मरणान्त उपवास करूँगा। मेरा मर जाना ही अच्छा है।

पर्वत के जिस स्थान पर वे सब वानर आमरण उपवास के लिए बैठे थे, उस प्रदेश में चिरंजीवी पक्षी गृध्रराज सम्पाति आये। वे जटायु के बड़े भ्राता थे। वे अपने बल एवं पुरुषार्थ के लिए सर्वत्र प्रसिद्ध थे। सर्वप्रथम तो वे प्रसन्न हुए कि दीर्घकाल के पश्चात् बिना परिश्रम के इतने वानरों का भोजन प्राप्त हुआ। पक्षीराज सम्पाति ने इन वानरों से कहा कि जो–जो मरता जाएगा उसको मैं क्रमशः भक्षण करता जाऊँगा। अंगद ने यह सुनकर हनुमानजी से कहा कि देखिये सीताजी के निमित्त वानरों को विपत्ति में डालने के लिए यह सम्पाति सूर्यपुत्र यम यहाँ आ गया है। हम लोगों ने न तो श्रीरामचन्द्रजी का कार्य किया और न वानरराज सुग्रीव की आज्ञा का पालन किया। इसी बीच यह विपत्ति आ गई है। श्रीसीताजी का प्रिय करने की इच्छा से गृध्रराज जटायु ने जो साहसपूर्ण कार्य किया था, वह सब आप लोगों ने सुना ही होगा। गृध्रराज जटायु ही भाग्यशाली हैं जो युद्ध में रावण के हाथ से मारे गये और परमगति को प्राप्त हुए। वे सुग्रीव के भय से मुक्त हुए। इस प्रकार–

*जटायुषो विनाशेन राज्ञो दशरथस्य च।*
*हरणेन च वैदेह्याः संशयं हरयो गताः।।*

*श्री वा.रा. किष्किन्धाकाण्ड सर्ग 56-14*

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Source: CB Insights

**WAITING FOR NEWS:** Foreign entrepreneurs in the US are tracking news of an announcement that would allow visa-less startup types to stay for two to five years

Nigel Sharp isn't making any plans past May 2017. He's a UK citizen trying to build a startup in the US, which means he can't get a conventional work visa. His temporary one, granted with the support of the University of Colorado at Boulder as part of an entrepreneurship programme, expires on May 28. "I have no clear path on what happens afterward," he says.

His last company got $550,000 from US venture funds two years ago but folded after failing to secure further investment. Too risky, he and his co-founders were told, until you can find a way to resolve your immigration status and stay in the US for good.

That's why Sharp, 31, is keeping close tabs on a proposal from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services. The inelegantly named entrepreneurial "parole" would allow visa-less startup types to stay in the country for two years, with a possible three-year extension, if they own at least 15% of a US-based startup formed in the past three years that's raised $345,000 in investment capital.

Immigrants have a strong track record of launching Silicon Valley successes (Google, EBay, PayPal), and have founded or co-founded half the US startups worth $1 billion or more. Prominent Valley investors have been pushing for a special visa for startup founders since 2009, arguing that these immigrants are creating their own jobs and possibly many more. With legislative action likely to be stalled for years, the parole programme is the startup community's best bet.

The US Department of Homeland Security estimates that about 3,000 entrepreneurs will use the parole programme each year. The proposal, still awaiting revisions following a public comment period, is unlikely to go into effect until the first half of 2017, so it could easily be revoked by the next President. Which is why investors remain cautious. Plus, a lot of promising companies won't be able to hit that $345,000 mark, says Dave McClure, a partner at accelerator 500 Startups, which typically provides startups with $150,000.

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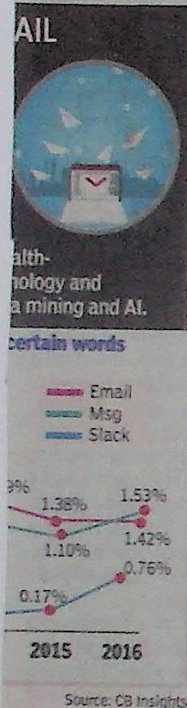
# I COULDN'T GET GOOD FILTER COFFEE IN OFFICE

Chithra Uthappa started her career in the recruitment space, and worked in large corporates, including Microsoft and Aditya Birla Group. "I saw employees drinking cappuccinos and lattes from vending machines, but there was no way of getting a good cup of filter coffee without walking to the nearest Adigas or Ananda Bhavan," Uthappa recalls. Her father owned huge plantations in Coorg and sold coffee to dealers around the world. So she decided to introduce good, Indian coffee from her own plantations to employees in mid-size and large companies. She started Aromas of Coorg with her husband, and targetted companies with more than 200 employees. The venture works with 89 companies in Bengaluru and delivers coffee powder to individuals on order. Now, 280 employees strong, Aromas of Coorg is profitable and Chithra is planning to expand to other states. "I let my cuppa speak for itself," she says.

**TASTE OF HOME:** CHITHRA UTHAPPA

# जटायु, सम्पाति एवं सुपार्श्व का त्याग

सत्यव्रत शास्त्री

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*श्री वा.रा. किष्किन्धाकाण्ड सर्ग 55-12*

मैं आप लोगों से प्रतिज्ञापूर्वक कहता हूँ कि मैं किष्किन्धापुरी नहीं जाऊँगा। यहीं मरणान्त उपवास करूँगा। मेरा मर जाना ही अच्छा है।

पर्वत के जिस स्थान पर वे सब वानर आमरण उपवास के लिए बैठे थे, उस प्रदेश में चिरंजीवी पक्षी गृध्रराज सम्पाति आये। वे जटायु के बड़े भ्राता थे। वे अपने बल एवं पुरुषार्थ के लिए सर्वत्र प्रसिद्ध थे। सर्वप्रथम तो वे प्रसन्न हुए कि दीर्घकाल के पश्चात् बिना परिश्रम के इतने वानरों का भोजन प्राप्त हुआ। पक्षीराज सम्पाति ने इन वानरों से कहा कि जो–जो मरता जाएगा उसको मैं क्रमशः भक्षण करता जाऊँगा। अंगद ने यह सुनकर हनुमानजी से कहा कि देखिये सीताजी के निमित्त वानरों को विपत्ति में डालने के लिए यह सम्पाति सूर्यपुत्र यम यहाँ आ गया है। हम लोगों ने न तो श्रीरामचन्द्रजी का कार्य किया और न वानरराज सुग्रीव की आज्ञा का पालन किया। इसी बीच यह विपत्ति आ गई है। श्रीसीताजी का प्रिय करने की इच्छा से गृध्रराज जटायु ने जो साहसपूर्ण कार्य किया था, वह सब आप लोगों ने सुना ही होगा। गृध्रराज जटायु ही भाग्यशाली हैं जो युद्ध में रावण के हाथ से मारे गये और परमगति को प्राप्त हुए। वे सुग्रीव के भय से मुक्त हुए। इस प्रकार–

*जटायुषो विनाशेन राज्ञो दशरथस्य च।*
*हरणेन च वैदेह्याः संशयं हरयो गताः।।*

*श्री वा.रा. किष्किन्धाकाण्ड सर्ग 56-14*

राजा दशरथजी की मृत्यु, जटायु का विनाश

और विदेहकुमारी सीताजी का अपहरण इन सब घटनाओं से इस समय वानरों का जीवन संशय में हो गया है। अंगद के मुख से यह सुनकर गृध्रराज सम्पाति ने पूछा–यह कौन है? जो मेरे प्राणों से प्रिय भाई जटायु के वध की बात कर रहा है। इसे सुनकर उसका ह्रदय शोक सागर में डूब गया। गृध्रराज सम्पाति ने वानरों से कहा कि जटायु मेरा छोटा भाई था। उसकी प्रशंसा व पराक्रम प्रशंसनीय हैं। आप सब पर्वत से नीचे मुझे उतार दें। मैं सब घटनाक्रम विस्तारपूर्वक सुनना चाहता हूँ। सम्पाति बोले कि जटायु दशरथ पुत्र राम को कैसे मिले ? जटायु दशरथजी के मित्र किस प्रकार हुए ? सम्पाति ने सूर्य की किरणों से पंख जलने की कथा कही किन्तु वानरों को उसकी कथा पर विश्वास नहीं हुआ। वानर सम्पाति के कर्म से शंकित थे। वानरों ने सोचा कि उपवास से मरने में विलम्ब होगा। अतः अच्छा है कि शीघ्र मृत्यु आ जाय और हम इसका भोजन बन जायँ। अंगद ने उस गीध को पर्वत शिखर से उतार कर अपना परिचय देते हुए कहा कि प्रतापी वानरराज ऋक्षराज मेरे पितामह थे। मैं उनके पुत्र बाली का पुत्र हूँ। श्रीरामचन्द्रजी पिता की आज्ञा पालन में तत्पर होकर दण्डकारण्य में आये थे। उनके साथ उनके छोटे भाई लक्ष्मण और उनकी धर्मपत्नी विदेहकुमारी सीताजी भी थीं।

जनस्थान आने पर उनकी पत्नी सीता को रावण ने बलपूर्वक हर लिया है। उस समय गृध्रराज जटायु ने, जो कि दशरथजी के मित्र थे, रावण को आकाश मार्ग से सीता को ले जाते देखा। जटायु ने रावण पर वार कर उसके रथ को नष्ट–भ्रष्ट कर सीताजी को भूमि पर उतार दिया। जटायु वृद्ध थे। युद्ध करते–करते अन्त में रावण के हाथों मृत्यु को प्राप्त हुए। श्रीरामजी ने सुग्रीव से मित्रता कर मेरे पिता बाली का वध कर दिया। हम राजा सुग्रीव की आज्ञा से सीता की खोज कर रहे हैं।

सम्पाति ने बताया कि जटायु मेरा छोटा भाई था। उसके स्वयं के और जटायु के पंख सूर्य की उष्णता से जल जाने तथा इन्द्र के द्वारा वृत्रासुर वध की कहानी बताई। युवराज अंगद सम्पाति से जटायु का भाई जानकर राक्षसराज रावण के निवास स्थान के बारे में पूछने लगे। सम्पाति ने कहा कि मैं बेपर का गीध हूँ, वृद्ध हूँ तथा शक्तिहीन हूँ किन्तु श्रीराम की सहायता अवश्य करूँगा। मैंने जो अभी तक देखा है, सुनो–

*जानामि वारुणाँल्लोकान् विष्णौस्त्रैविक्रमानपि।*
*देवासुरविमर्दांश्च ह्यमृतस्य विमन्थनम्।।*

*श्री वा.रा. किष्किन्धाकाण्ड सर्ग 58-13*

मैं वरुण लोकों को जानता हूँ। वामनावतार के समय भगवान विष्णु ने जहाँ–जहाँ अपने तीन पग रखे थे उन स्थानों का भी मुझे ज्ञान है। अमृत मन्थन तथा देवासुरसंग्राम भी मेरी देखी और जानी गई घटनाएँ हैं–

*समुद्रं नेतुमिच्छामि भवद्भिर्वरुणालयम्।*
*प्रदास्याम्युदकं भ्रातुः स्वर्गतस्य महात्मनः।।*

*श्री वा.रा. किष्किन्धाकाण्ड सर्ग 58-35*

अब मैं तुम्हारी सहायता से समुद्र के किनारे चलना चाहता हूँ वहाँ स्वर्गवासी भाई महात्मा जटायु को जलाञ्जलि प्रदान करूँगा।

एक दिन मैंने भी देखा दुष्ट रावण सब प्रकार के गहनों से सजी हुई एक रूपवती युवती को हर कर लिये जा रहा था। वह देवी हा राम! हा राम! हा लक्ष्मण! की रट लगाती हुई एवं अपने गहनें फेंकती और अपने शरीर के अवयवों को कम्पित करती हुई छटपटा रही थी। वह काले राक्षस के समीप बादलों में चमकती हुई बिजली के समान रेशमी पीताम्बर में

*वहिनना च जलं नष्टं वहिनं शुष्क-तृणेन च।।*
*पीताः सप्त समुद्राश्च द्विर्णेनेकेन जह्नना।*
*धातुर्मतिर्विचित्रा च दुर्ज्ञेया भूवनत्रये।।*

(अर्थात् वह विधाता अघटित घटना को घटित करने वाला ऐसा देवता है, जो एक तिनके से पर्वत को नष्ट करने वाला है, एक कीट से सिंह को मरवाता है। मच्छर से हाथी को, बच्चे के हाथों से महावीर को, क्षुद्र जन्तुओं से महान जन्तुओं को, चूहे से बिलाव को और मेढ़क से सर्प को नष्ट करवा देता है। विधाता की गति इसीलिए बड़ी विचित्र है। उसे कौन जान सकता है ? ऐसा सुनने में आया है कि जह्न नामक ऋषि ने सातों समुद्रों का पान कर लिया था। यह विधाता की ही गति के कारण संभव हुआ था। यह भुवन उन्हीं के प्रदत्त कर्म-लेख का परिणाम है।) अर्थात् यह उक्ति समस्त जगत् में सही कही जाती है–

*विधाता की गति, टारे नहीं टरै।*

(अर्थात् विधाता की कर्म लेखन गति कभी भी टाले नहीं टलती है। मानव जीवन में जो विधाता ने लिख दिया, उसके लिखे कर्म में संशोधन का अधिकार किसी भी देव-देवी को नहीं है।)

पुरातत्वविद् ऋषि जैमिनि बरुआ ने स्पष्ट रूप से विमाता और विधाता की इन मूर्तियों के बारे में लिखा है कि ''सारे मरु-प्रदेश में ही नहीं, सम्भवतः समग्र भारत में विधाता और विधातृ (विमाता) की मूर्तियां प्राप्त ही नहीं हैं''। इसके आगे उन्होंने और भी चौंकाने वाली बात यह लिखी है कि-झालरापाटन के शनिमंदिर (प्राचीन इमली गेट के निकट) में एक मात्र हमें इस दम्पति की मूर्तियां दिखायी दीं तो हमारा मन अपार हर्ष से भर गया। विधाता और विमाता दोनों की ही चाहे हमें एक-एक ही मूर्ति देखने को मिली, किन्तु इससे यह स्पष्ट हो गया कि इनके प्रति केवल लोक मानस का ही नहीं, मूर्तिकारों का भी सौमनस्य रहा होगा।'' बरुआ के अनुसार राजस्थान में यह मूर्ति अपनी अद्‌भुत शैली की अत्यन्त दुर्लभ मूर्ति है।

झालरापाटन में इमली दरवाजे के निकट स्थित शनिमंदिर में शनिदेव सहित अनेक ग्रहों तथा चन्द्रावती की प्राचीन देवमूर्तियां सुपूज्य रूप में दर्शनीय हैं। इन्हीं मूर्तियों में 16वीं, 17 वीं, सदी की दो रक्त पाषाणफलक पर उत्कीर्ण मूर्तियों विधाता और विधातृ (विमाता) की हैं जो क्रमशः पुरुष-स्त्री देवरूपी तथा अभी भी सूपूज्य हैं।[5] इन मूर्तियों में बड़ी विचित्रता है। यहां विधाता के बांयी ओर विमाता (विधात्री) की मूर्ति प्रतिष्ठित है। इन दोनों दुर्लभ मूर्तियों की विशेषता यह है कि गृहस्थ धर्म के अनुरूप उन्होंने वस्त्र पहनकर वस्त्र की ही पगड़ी को धारण किया हुआ है, जो मध्य युग में प्रायः दीवान पहना करते थे।

इस लेख के अनुसार-यहां विधाता की मूर्ति 24 X20 इंच माप की है। इसके शीश पर दीवानी पगड़ी का सुन्दर अंकन दृष्टव्य है। मूर्ति के कानों में गोलाकार कुण्डलाकृति तथा ग्रीवा में मणियुक्त माला तथा हार है। विधाता के कटि प्रदेश पर पहनने वाली धोती के ऊपर का पट्टा तथा उत्तरीय वस्त्र का सुन्दर अंकन है। पद्मासन मुद्रासदृश इस मूर्ति में विधाता ने अपनी बायीं भुजा की अंगुलियों से लेखनी पकड़ी हुई है, जिसकी नोंक नीचे रखी स्याही की दवात में है। जबकि दायीं भुजा की हथेली में एक कागज पत्रक दर्शित है। यह उपक्रम उनके द्वारा सृष्टि के कर्मों के नियमन, लेखन किये जाने का भाव माना जा सकता है। विधाता ने अपने कन्धों पर सुन्दर उत्तरीय भी धारण किया हुआ है, जो घुटनों तक लटका है। पीछे की ओर ओपरने का

प्रदर्शन है। वर्तमान में शनिमंदिर के पुजारी ने भ्रमवश इस मूर्ति के ऊपर धर्मराज लिख दिया है।

इसी मूर्ति के निकट विमाता (विधातृ–बेमाता) की ललितासन समान मुद्रा की लगभग उक्त माप की मूर्ति प्रतिष्ठित है। इसमें भी विमाता के शीश पर वस्त्र की पगड़ी है। जिसके नीचे एक वस्त्र की पट्टी का तथा ग्रीवा में हेमसूत्र का अंकन है। विमाता कानों में दो–दो कुण्डल धारित किये हैं। मूर्ति में विमाता के दायें कंधे पर उत्तरीय है जो उनकी ग्रीवा में तिरछा होते हुए बायें वक्षस्थल के नीचे से आते हुए पीठ तक दर्शित है। उनका बांया पैर मुड़ा हुआ उक्त प्रकार की मुद्रा में है, जिसमें जंघा पर उत्तरीय वस्त्र का अंकन नहीं है। यहां भी विमाता के बायें हाथ की अंगुलियों में लेखनी है, जबकि दाहिने हाथ में वे पुस्तक का पृष्ठ थामे हुए हैं। उनकी मुद्रा भी कर्म, धर्म के लेखन की चिन्तन प्रधान भावाभिव्यक्ति में है।

यद्यपि पूरे देश के प्रत्येक समाज, घरों तथा मान्यताओं में विमाता तथा विधाता को भली भांति जाना जाता है तथा पुराणों में उनका वर्णन भी मिलता है। इसी के साथ मूर्तिकला परम्परा में भी उनका विधान प्राप्त होता है, परन्तु यह एक चकित कर देने वाला तथ्य है कि इन दोनों देवी–देव की मूर्तियां देश के किसी प्राचीन देवालय में अथवा उत्खनन में आज तक प्राप्त नहीं हो पाई हैं।

*विमाता और विधाता मूर्ति, झालरा पाटन*

## संदर्भ ग्रन्थ


1. महाभारत (13.149.64) चित्रशाला प्रेस, पूना खण्ड 1 से 6 प्रकाशन वर्ष 1929–33 ई.

2. अग्निपुराण–चौखम्बा संस्कृत सिरीज, वाराणसी, प्रकाशन वर्ष 1966 ई. (17.5)

3. ब्रह्मवैवर्तपुराण (कृष्णखण्ड, सप्तम अध्याय) गुरुमण्डल सीरीज, कलकत्ता, प्रकाशन वर्ष 1954 ई.

4. बरुआ ऋषि जैमिनी कोशिक–सेठ सूरजमल जालान अभिनन्दन ग्रन्थ, (द्वितीय खण्ड–देव मंदिर प्रकरण) पृष्ठ 150 कलकत्ता, प्रकाशन वर्ष 1963 ई.


जैकी स्टूडियो, 13–मंगलपुरा, झालावाड़– 326001 (राज.)

भगत भूमि भूसुर सुरभि सुर हित लागि कृपाल।
करत चरित धरि मनुज तनु सुनत मिटहिं जग जाल।।

बिजली जैसी चमक रही थी। श्रीराम का नाम लेते ही मैं समझ गया कि वह सीताजी थीं। मैं उस राक्षस का पता बताता हूँ–

*पुत्रौ विश्रवसः साक्षाद् भ्राता वैश्रवणस्य च।*
*अध्यास्ते नगरीं लंका रावणो नाम राक्षसः।।*
*इतो द्वीपे समुद्रस्य सम्पूर्णे शतयोजने।*
*तस्मिँल्लका पुरी रम्या निर्मिता विश्वकर्मणा।।*
*श्री वा.रा. किष्किन्धाकाण्ड सर्ग 58-19-20*

रावण नाम का राक्षस महर्षि विश्रवा का पुत्र और साक्षात् कुबेर का भाई है। वह लंका नाम की नगरी में निवास करता है। यहाँ से चार सौ कोस की दूरी पर समुद्र में एक द्वीप है जहाँ विश्वकर्मा ने अत्यन्त सुन्दर लंकापुरी का निर्माण किया। वानरों और जाम्बवान ने पक्षिराज से पूछा–सीताजी कहाँ है ? किसने उन्हें देखा है और कौन उनको हर कर ले गया? यह सुनकर सम्पाति बोले–श्रीसीताजी इस समय जहाँ है और जिसने यह सब वृतान्त कहा है एवं जिस तरह मैंने सुना है वह सब बताता हूँ।

मैं दुर्गम पर्वत पर गिरा था। मेरी प्राणशक्ति क्षीण हो गई थी। मैं वृद्ध हो गया था। उस अवस्था में मेरा पुत्र पक्षिप्रवर सुपार्श्व ही यथा समय आहार देकर प्रतिदिन मेरा भरण–पोषण करता है। सर्पों में क्रोध तेज होता है और मृगों को भय अधिक होता है उसी प्रकार गीध जाति में भूख बड़ी ही तीव्र होती है। मैं भूखा था और मेरा पुत्र भोजन की तलाश में गया तथा सूर्यास्त के समय खाली हाथ लौट आया। मैंने क्रोध में पुत्र को कठोर वचन कहे।

उसने बताया कि वह अपनी चोंच नीची करके समुद्र के ऊपर विचरने वाले सहस्त्रों जन्तुओं के मार्ग को रोक कर ठहर गया। उसने देखा कि कोयल की राशि के समान काला कोई पुरुष एक स्त्री को लेकर जा रहा है। उस स्त्री की कान्ति सूर्योदय–काल की प्रभा के समान प्रकाशित हो रही थी। मैं उसे आपके आहर हेतु लाने वाला था किन्तु उस पुरुष ने विनम्रतापूर्वक मधुर वाणी में मुझ से मार्ग की याचना की। वह तेज गति से चला गया। उसके चले जाने पर आकाशचारी प्राणी, सिद्धचारण आदि ने आकर मेरा बड़ा सम्मान किया। वे महर्षि बोले सौभाग्य की बात है कि सीता जीवित है। तुम्हारी दृष्टि पड़ने पर स्त्री के साथ आया हुआ वह पुरुष किस तरह सकुशल बच गया। अतः तुम्हारा कल्याण हो। सिद्ध पुरुषों ने ही बताया कि वह काला पुरुष राक्षसों का राजा लंकापति था। सुपार्श्व ने सम्पाति को बताया कि सीता शोकपूर्ण थीं। उसके आभूषण गिर रहे थे। श्रीराम व लक्ष्मण का नाम पुकार रही थी। मेरे पुत्र ने सीताजी की रक्षा नहीं की इससे मुझे बहुत दुःख हुआ। उसी समय राजर्षि निशाकर के प्रसाद से सम्पाति के लाल रंग के पंख निकल आये। इतना होने के उपरान्त सम्पाति ने कहा कि मुझे पंखों का प्राप्त होना तुम लोगों की कार्यसिद्धि का विश्वास दिलाने वाला है। इतना कह कर सम्पाति आकाश गमन की शक्ति का परिचय प्राप्त करने के लिए उस पर्वत शिखर से उड़ गये।

इस रामकथा का सार यह है कि पशु–पक्षी भी अपनी भूख को भूलकर सामने भोजन होने पर भी उसे त्याग देते हैं। सुपार्श्व ने रावण को मार्ग याचना की अनुमति देकर अपने वचन की गरिमा रखी। दूसरी तरफ पिता सम्पाति को भूखा रहना पड़ा। आज के मानव के भोजन की भूख, पद, मान, सम्मान, प्रतिष्ठा, धन की भूख बढ़ती ही जा रही है। यह दुःख की बात है कि वह इन पशु–पक्षी से शिक्षा प्राप्त न कर सका। ■

सीनियर एम.आई.जी.–103, व्यासनगर, ऋषिनगर विस्तार, उज्जैन (म.प्र.)

# भारत की एक मात्र देव मूर्ति : विमाता-विधाता

ललित शर्मा

भारतीय मूर्तिकला के संसार में शैव, शाक्त, वैष्णव, गाणपत्य, सौर, जैन, बौद्ध आदि धर्मों एवं सम्प्रदायों के अलावा अनेक ऐसे विशिष्ट देवी–देवताओं की मूर्तियां भी मिलती हैं, जिनकी प्रतिष्ठा बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण रही है। ऐसे देवों में अष्ट दिक्पाल, नवग्रह, प्रतिहार, नदीदेवता सहित अप्सराएं भी है।

यहां हम इस लेख में उक्त प्रकार के कुछ ऐसे प्रमुख देव की विशिष्ट मूर्तियों का परिचय दे रहे हैं, जो सामान्य पाठकों एवं शोधार्थियों की जानकारी के लिये महत्वपूर्ण हो सकती हैं तथा राजस्थान के झालावाड़ क्षेत्र में मिली हैं।

सम्पूर्ण भारतवर्ष में सृष्टि के कर्मों का नियमन करने वाले एक मात्र देवी–देव विमाता (विधातृ या लोकभाषा में बेमाता) तथा विधाता की अलभ्य और दुर्लभ मूर्तियां यदि कहीं मिलती हैं तो वह सौभाग्य केवल मात्र झालावाड़ जिले की प्राचीन नगरी झालरापाटन को है।

महाभारत (13, 149, 64) में स्पष्ट रूप से जिस देवादिदेव को *'विज्ञाता सहस्त्रांशुर्विधाता व्यक्त लक्षणं'* कह कर पूजित किया गया,[1] उसी विधाता को अग्निपुराण के 'गणभेदनामाध्याय' में निम्न प्रकार से महनीय रूप से रेखांकित किया गया है–[2]

*द्वौ धाता च विधाता च पौराणों जगतां पति।*
*द्वौ शास्तारौ त्रिलोकेस्मिन् धर्म्माधमौ प्रकीर्तितौ।*

(अर्थात्–प्राचीनकाल से संसार के दो ही ईश्वर हैं। एक धाता और दूसरे विधाता जिन्हें लोकसाहित्य में विमाता–विधाता अथवा बेमाता–विधाता कहा है। ये दोनों इस संसार के शासक हैं तथा दोनों ही संसार के सभी प्राणियों, जीवों के धर्म एवं अधर्म का नियंत्रण अपने हाथों से करते हैं।) लोकमान्यता के अनुसार–प्राणियों के धर्म कर्म का लेखन विधाता करते हैं। ये विधाता समस्त सृष्टि के कर्मों का नियमन करने वाले देव हैं। इसी कारण प्राचीन मूर्तिशास्त्र में विधाता और विधातृ की मूर्तियों का अंकन श्रद्धा भाव से हुआ है, जहां अन्य देवी–देवों की प्रतिष्ठि हुआ करती थी।

ब्रह्मवैवर्तपुराण के कृष्णखण्ड के सप्तम अध्याय का अध्ययन करने पर ज्ञात होता है कि मथुरा शासक कंस का विनाश उसके भानजे कृष्ण द्वारा हुआ था। परन्तु उसके विनाश की भविष्यवाणी पूर्व में ही जिस प्रकार हुई थी, वह कथन बहुत ही स्पष्ट और प्राचीन मान्यताओं का पृष्ठपोषक है। कंस ने स्वयं ही कहा है, जिसमें विधाता की गति के अटल नियम का वर्णन है–[3]

*तृणेन पर्व्वतं हन्तु शक्तिं धाता च दैवतः।*
*कीटेन सिंह शार्दूलं मशकेन गर्जे तथा।।*
*शिशुना च महावीरं महानतं क्षुद्रजन्मतुभिः।*
*मूषिकेण च मार्ज्जारं मण्डूकेन भुजङ्गमम्।।*
*एवं जन्येन जनकं भक्ष्येणैवे च भक्षकम्।*

# आधुनिक विश्व में रामायण की प्रासंगिकता

□ विद्या सागर आनंद (ब्रिटेन)

आज के विश्व में दूरियां महत्त्वहीन हो गई हैं। विमान-सेवाओं ने विश्व को एक अंतर्राष्ट्रीय गांव बना दिया है। दूर-दराज के देशों, वहां के लोगों को जानने के लिए हमें महीनों लंबी यात्राएं नहीं करनी पड़तीं। कम्प्यूटर, फैक्स-मशीन, उपग्रह टी.वी. और दूरसंचार के अन्य माध्यमों ने दूरियां मिटा दी हैं। लेकिन क्या हम आध्यात्मिक और नैतिक दृष्टि से भी एक-दूसरे के निकट आ सके हैं ? सच तो यह है कि अपार संपत्ति तथा अपूर्व तकनीकी और वैज्ञानिक प्रगति के बावजूद विश्व में आध्यात्मिकता की दृष्टि से बेहद निर्धनता है। आज का विश्व मदिरा, बलात्कार, हिंसा, मादक पदार्थों और नैतिक मूल्यों के पतन में डूबा हुआ है। विशेषतः भौतिक दृष्टि से विकसित पाश्चात्य जगत में घोर असंतोष व्याप्त है। उसे एक ऐसे दार्शनिक पारस पत्थर की तलाश है, जिससे मानसिक शांति और संतोष प्राप्त हो और जो उसे आध्यात्मिक और सांस्कृतिक विकास का उत्कर्ष प्रदान कर सके।

लंदन में बसे एक विश्व नागरिक के रूप में मैंने, अपने विश्व-भ्रमण के दौरान अतिवादी, उच्छृंखल, दिशाहीन भौतिकता के दुष्परिणामों को देखा है। यह मेरा सौभाग्य है कि मैं उस देश (भारत) का मूल निवासी हूँ, जिसने हजारों वर्ष पूर्व भौतिकता की अति की चुनौतियों का सामना किया। लेकिन उसी देश में उससे भी पूर्व संतों, दार्शनिकों और ऋषियों की एक ऐसी परंपरा भी थी, जिसने भौतिक प्रगति से उत्पन्न होने वाली समस्याओं का पूर्वानुमान लगा लिया था। इन प्राज्ञ पुरुषों ने प्रगति में छिपी विनाश की संभावनाओं को जानकर धन की उपासना के गंभीर दुष्प्रभावों के प्रति हमें बहुत पहले ही सचेत कर दिया था। उन्होंने बताया था कि इससे हम पाप, कष्ट तथा बुद्धि और चरित्र की दुर्बलताओं से ग्रसित होते जाएंगे।

हमारे प्राचीन विद्वानों ने इस विषय पर अनेक ग्रंथों की रचना की है। किन्तु उन सब ग्रंथों के बीच रामायण ही एक ऐसा ग्रंथ है जो बड़े प्रभावपूर्ण सुस्पष्ट, कवित्वमय तथा व्यावहारिक ढंग से विनाश के कगार पर खड़ी मानवता के सम्मुख उन शाश्वत सत्यों को उजागर करता है, जो उसके अस्तित्व की रक्षा के लिए परमावश्यक हैं। यह ग्रंथ

दिग्भ्रमित, पीड़ित और प्रताड़ित मानव को, चाहे वह पश्चिम का हो या पूर्व का, विश्व मानव बनने की प्रेरणा और दिशा-निर्देश देता है।

रामायण में वर्णित घटनाओं में उस युग की झांकी मिलती है जब मनुष्य ने शासन व्यवस्था, कर-प्रणाली और नियमों का निर्धारण कर इतिहास का निर्माण किया था। नवीन मूल्यों वाले एक नवीन समाज का गठन हुआ। धर्म ने मनुष्य को अच्छाइयों की ओर प्रेरित किया। लेकिन धर्म की स्थापना से ही समाज अच्छा नहीं हो जाता। मनुष्यों के स्वभाव, उनके बहुविध चरित्रों, उनकी आर्थिक-सामाजिक परिस्थितियों उनकी शिक्षा के विभिन्न स्तरों, उनके ज्ञान-अज्ञान, पाप-पुण्य, उनकी महत्त्वकांक्षाओं, उनके स्वार्थ-परमार्थ, सभी का चित्रण रामायण में पूरी सच्चाई और ईमानदारी से मिलता है। वहां नायक भी हैं और खलनायक भी। वहां दुर्बल-सबल, साहसी-भीरु, अज्ञ-ज्ञानी, लोभी-देशभक्त, निर्लिप्त-आसक्त और विवेकी तथा अविवेकी सभी तरह के पात्र हैं। वहां हम असत्य तथा असुंदर से क्षुब्ध होते हैं। सीता से बढ़कर सुंदर, कोमल और गुणवती नायिका हैं कहां ? क्या राम से बढ़कर करुणापरायण और महान नायक है कोई ? स्वार्थरहित लक्ष्मण से बढ़कर कौन है, जो विनम्रता, स्वामिभक्ति और श्रद्धा की प्रतिमूर्ति है ?

आज ऐसे आदर्श चरित्रों–नायकों और नायिकाओं की अक्सर चर्चा होती है, जो नई पीढ़ी के लिए अनुकरणीय हैं। भारत और पूरे एशिया क्षेत्र में, अनेक ऐसे आदर्श स्त्री-पुरुषों ने जन्म लिया। एक प्रसिद्ध विद्वान ने कहा था कि लोकनायक वह होता है जो अपने लोगों की स्वतंत्रता, स्वाधीनता और शौर्य की भावनाओं का प्रतिनिधित्व करे। और रामायण ने सहस्रों वर्ष पूर्व ऐसे ही शुद्ध पवित्र गुणों से संपन्न नायक का वर्णन किया।

रामायण में जिन आत्मत्याग, देशभक्ति तथा न्यायप्रियता के उदात्त गुणों का चित्रण किया गया है, वही गुण शताब्दियों से मौखिक परंपरा में भी चले आ रहे हैं। गांवों में, जहां अधिकतर लोग पढ़ना-लिखना तक नहीं जानते, वे एक जगह बैठ कर उस सतयुग की प्रेरक कथाएं सुनते हैं।

भारत के युगप्रवर्तक महान नेता जाने-अनजाने रामायण और उसमें वर्णित शाश्वत मूल्यों से प्रभावित हुए हैं। कई लोग हताशा के स्वर में यह कहते सुने जाते हैं कि आज परिस्थितियां बहुत बदल चुकी हैं, पुराने युग की सहज-सरल जीवन-पद्धति आज के युग में नहीं चलती। उनका कहना है कि अब मत्स्यन्याय का युग है। जब सबल दुर्बल का विनाश कर देता है, उसे खा जाता है। 'जिसकी लाठी उसकी भैंस' के इस युग में मानव प्रेम, देशभक्ति, समाज के प्रति दायित्व जैसी भावनाओं का महत्त्व कुछ लोगों तक ही सीमित रह गया है।

लेकिन यह एक सतही दृष्टिकोण है। वैसे तो यह युग बाजार पर आधारित अर्थव्यवस्था के एकाधिपत्य का युग है, जिसमें अन्य किसी अर्थव्यवस्था का हस्तक्षेप नहीं। इसी कारण एशिया के विभिन्न देश भी बाजार पर आधारित अर्थव्यवस्था को अपना रहे

हैं। लेकिन साथ ही उनके नीति-निर्धारक यह भी सुनिश्चित कर रहे हैं कि बाजार को ही सर्वेसर्वा न मान लिया जाए। इस बात का भी ध्यान रखा जाए कि अर्थव्यवस्था मात्र कुछ संपन्न लोगों के प्रति ही नहीं, अपितु पूरे समाज के प्रति उत्तरदायी है। बाज़ारोन्मुख अर्थव्यवस्था की ओर अग्रसर होने का यह अर्थ नहीं कि हम सदियों से चले आ रहे अपने मानवीय जीवन दर्शन को भूल जाएं। वह जीवन-दर्शन जो रामायण जैसे ग्रंथों में प्रतिपादित किया गया है।

भारत की विदेश नीति का निर्माण करते समय भी, हमारे नीति-निर्धारकों, विशेष रूप से हमारे नेता पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू, ने रामायण में प्रतिपादित आदर्शों को ग्रहण किया। उदाहरणस्वरूप पंचशील का सिद्धांत रामायण से ही ग्रहण किया गया है। शांतिपूर्ण सह-अस्तित्व, पड़ोसियों के साथ अच्छा व्यवहार, धर्म का अनुशीलन, स्वतंत्र प्रभुतासंपन्न राष्ट्रों के सामाजिक-आर्थिक विकास का अधिकार, युद्ध से विमुख होना, ऐसे आदर्श हैं जो संकट और संघर्ष से घिरे विश्व में पथ-प्रदर्शक नक्षत्रों से देदीप्यमान हैं।

भारत ने विश्व को सर्वप्रथम 'गुट निरपेक्षता' का नैतिक सिद्धांत दिया। रामायण ने हमें सिखाया है कि जब सत् और असत् के बीच संघर्ष होता है तब निष्पक्षता अर्थहीन है। ऐसे में हमारा कर्तव्य है कि हम सत् के पक्षधर हों। किन्तु इसके साथ ही हमें सहिष्णुता भी सीखनी है। 'जियो और जीने दो' का सिद्धांत भी अपनाना है। किसी एक देश अथवा एक गुट को अपने विश्वासों अथवा अपनी नीतियों को दूसरे पर थोपने का अधिकार नहीं है। यह तो युद्ध का रास्ता है। वास्तव में गुट-निरपेक्षता का अर्थ निष्क्रियता और उदासीनता नहीं है। इसके अनुसार हर राष्ट्र को बिना किसी डर या दबाव के अपने मित्र चुनने का अधिकार है। आदर्शों के विवाद में न पड़कर, शांतिपूर्ण सह-अस्तित्व की दिशा में अपने प्रभाव का इस्तेमाल करना है। रामायण ने तो इस सत्य को हजारों वर्ष पूर्व स्वीकार कर लिया था। आज की परिस्थितियों में यदि गुटनिरपेक्ष आंदोलन न होता, तो विश्व कब का विनाश की ओर चल पड़ा होता। जब-जब युद्ध की आग मानवता को लील जाने के लिए भड़की है, तब-तब इस आंदोलन ने अग्निशामक की भूमिका निभाई है।

केवल एशिया में ही नहीं अपितु पश्चिमी देशों के विद्वानों द्वारा प्रशंसित और अभिनंदित रामायण की रचना कैसे हुई ? साहित्य, दर्शन,सामाजिक व्यवहार और अर्थशास्त्र के इस महाग्रंथ की प्रासंगिकता आज भी कैसे बनी हुई है ? किसने हमें यह बहुमूल्य विरासत प्रदान की है ?

पहले हैं इस महाग्रंथ के प्रणेता आदि कवि वाल्मीकि, जिनकी प्रतिभा और विद्वत्ता से हम इतने प्रभावित हैं कि उन्हें मात्र एक सामान्य मानव के रूप में ग्रहण नहीं कर पाते। इतिहास के उस सुदूरपूर्व काल में जब मिस्र का पहला पिरामिड भी बनकर तैयार नहीं हुआ था, जब प्राचीन यूनान में ओलंपिक अग्नि प्रज्वलित नहीं हुई थी और जब रेमस

और रोमसस ने भव्य नगरी रोम की आधारशिला भी नहीं रखी थी—वाल्मीकि ने अपनी लेखनी उठा ली थी और उसे आदर्शवादिता और व्यावहारिकता की मसि में डुबोकर काव्य-रचना आरंभ कर दी थी।

वाल्मीकि जीवन के विविधपक्षों को प्यार करते थे, उनका आदर करते थे। चाहे आकाश में उड़ता पक्षी हो, वन में विचरण करता मृग हो अथवा स्वयं मनुष्य हो, वाल्मीकि सभी के निकट थे। एक दिन उन्होंने एक ऐसा दृश्य देखा जिसने उन्हें विचलित कर दिया। तमसा-तट पर क्रौंच पक्षियों का एक जोड़ा केलिरत था कि तभी कहीं से एक तीर चला और उनमें से एक को वेध गया। दूसरे पक्षी के कातर रुदन से प्रभावित वाल्मीकि के मुख से अचानक एक श्लोक निकला—

मा निषाद ! प्रतिष्ठा त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः
यत्क्रौंचमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ॥

वे स्वयं चमत्कृत थे, इस काव्य-प्रस्फुटन से कि तभी उन्हें ईश्वरीय आदेश मिला कि वे इसी छंद में पुरुषोत्तम राम का जीवन लिखें।

रामस्य चरितं कृत्स्नं कुरु त्वमृषिसत्तम।
चतुर्विंशत्सहस्राणि श्लोकायुक्तवानृषि ॥
तथा सर्गशतान्यंच षट् काण्डानि तथोत्तरम् ॥

तब वाल्मीकि ने सात खंडों और चौबीस हजार श्लोकों में रामकथा की रचना की। उनके इस महाकाव्य में कल्पना, भाषा और शैली के साथ ज्ञान और उच्चादर्शों का अद्भुत समन्वय है। इसी समन्वय ने इस अपूर्ण साहित्यिक-दार्शनिक ग्रन्थ को विश्व-साहित्य की महान् रचनाओं की श्रेणी में ला खड़ा किया है। अनेक शताब्दियों बाद मिल्टन ने लिखा –"एक अच्छा ग्रंथ वह है जिसमें एक महान् आत्मा का जीवन रक्त प्रवाहित होता है।"

ये पंक्तियां जैसे रामायण को ही ध्यान में रखकर लिखी गई थीं। वस्तुतः यदि मिल्टन को रामायण पढ़ने का सुअवसर प्राप्त हुआ होता तो निश्चय ही उन्होंने इसकी भूरि-भूरि प्रशंसा की होती।

मधुर, रमणीय तथा अर्थपूर्ण रामायण के भावुक प्रसंगों की नाट्य प्रस्तुति भी सदियों से होती आई है। भारत में, शताब्दियों पूर्व के प्रारंभिक रंगमंच पर, प्रकृति की सुरम्य पृष्ठभूमि में इन प्रसंगों का मंचन होता आया है। कहते हैं, रामकथा के प्रेरक प्रसंगों की नाट्य प्रस्तुति को देखने के लिए हिंसक पशु भी अपनी स्वभावगत-क्रूरता छोड़कर शान्त स्तब्ध भाव से बैठे रहते थे। क्यों न हो ? रामायण की प्रेरणा भी तो वन्य-जगत् के एक निरीह प्राणी की निर्मम हत्या से ही उद्भूत हुई थी। मध्ययुगीन गायक जगह-जगह घूमकर रामकथा का गायन करते और लोग तन्मय होकर सुनते थे। उस समय के लोगों के पास रामायण जैसी महान् साहित्यिक कृतियों को सुनने और उससे लाभान्वित होने का समय

और सहृदयता थी।

उल्लेखनीय है कि रामायण केवल धार्मिक अवसरों पर ही नहीं पढ़ी जाती थी, अपितु साहित्यिक गोष्ठियों में भी उसका पठन-पाठन होता था। आज तक रामायण, न जाने कितने कवि, लेखक, नाटककार और संगीत-साधकों के लिए प्रेरणा-स्रोत रही है। आर. के. नारायण ने जिन्हें आधुनिक भारत का एक महान उपन्यासकार माना है और जिनकी तुलना ग्रैहम ग्रीन ने सुप्रसिद्ध रूसी लेखक चेखव से की है, अपने जीवन में रामायण के प्रभाव को सदा सहर्ष स्वीकार किया है। उन्होंने रामायण की टीका भी लिखी है। इससे पहले भी, कालिदास, भट्टि और भवभूति जैसे दिग्गज साहित्यकारों ने अपने लेखन पर रामायण के सुस्पष्ट प्रभाव को स्वीकार किया है।

रामायण का आज भी उतना ही आदर-सम्मान है, जितना आज से हजारों वर्ष पूर्व था, जब उसकी रचना हुई थी। इसका कारण यह है कि वह अमूर्त नहीं, साधारण जन के जीवन से दूर नहीं और न ही वह मानव के समक्ष असंभव, असाध्य लक्ष्य प्रस्तुत करती है। उसका कथ्य जीवन के निकट है, उसे मनुष्य की सीमाओं और दुर्बलताओं का आभास है। वह उन दुर्बलताओं का उपहास नहीं करती अपितु आचरण, व्यवहार के, मनुष्य द्वारा प्राप्त लक्ष्यों की स्थापना करती है। रामायण हमें विनम्रता सिखाती है। जैसा कि महर्षि अरविंद ने कहा था—'फलों से लदे वृक्ष झुक जाते हैं।'

रामायण में ऐसे अतर्कसंगत तथा स्वार्थपरक विचारों के लिए कोई स्थान नहीं है जैसे कि न्याय और नीति में अंतर होना चाहिए, या नैतिकता और सत्य परिस्थितियों पर आश्रित होते हैं, या जैसे उद्देश्य और उन्हें प्राप्त करने के साधनों के बारे में मतभेद अवास्तविक और समय नष्ट करने वाले होते हैं। या फिर ऐसे भाग्यवादी विचार जिनके आधार पर मान लिया जाता है कि मनुष्य की नियति, उसका स्वभाव-व्यवहार सब कुछ पूर्व निर्धारित तथा अपरिवर्तनीय है। रामायण मनुष्य की मौलिक महानता और शुचिता में विश्वास करती है। यहां मनुष्य शब्द में स्त्री-पुरुष दोनों का ही समावेश है। रामायण के कवि ने स्त्री पुरुष के बीच कभी कोई अंतर नहीं किया। उसने दोनों के भौतिक-दैहिक अंतर को तो स्वीकार किया है किन्तु स्त्री को कहीं भी पुरुष से लघुतर नहीं माना। प्रमाण है–सीता का उदात्त चरित्र-चित्रण।

रामायण पूर्णतः आशावदी ग्रंथ है। उसमें संदेह और नैराश्य को स्थान नहीं दिया गया है। यही संदेह और नैराश्य, बुद्धिवादिता की आड़ लेकर मानवीय मूल्यों को बिगाड़ते हैं। यही बुराई की प्रशंसा और अच्छाई की निंदा करते हैं। यह नहीं कि रामायण अपने आपको दैवी तथा अपराजेय घोषित करती है, जैसा कि कुछ परवर्ती धर्मों ने किया। वह तो मानव को जीवन के प्रति नयी दृष्टि देती है, उसे संपूर्णता की ओर अग्रसर करती है। किसी रूढ़िवादी दृष्टिकोण से निबद्ध न होने के कारण ही रामायण पर असंख्य टीकाएं लिखी गई हैं। हर टीकाकार यही सिद्ध करने की चेष्टा करता है कि रामायण में निहित

महान सत्य को एक नहीं अनेकानेक दृष्टियों से निरूपित किया जा सकता है। और यही वाल्मीकि का प्रतिपाद्य था। वे मानव-मन को, बुद्धि को संकुचित करना नहीं चाहते थे। वे अंधभक्ति भी नहीं चाहते थे। रामायण के रचयिता के महान हिन्दू धर्म में अंधभक्ति और मानसिक दासता के लिए कोई स्थान नहीं। उसका तो यही मानना है कि स्वयं चिंतन करो! बस यह जान लो कि कुछ ऐसे सत्य हैं, जो शाश्वत हैं, अलंघ्य हैं। रामायण को समझने के लिए हमें भी ऐसी ही दृष्टि की आवश्यकता है।

भारतीय समाज को अनिष्टकारी वर्ण-व्यवस्था से मुक्त करने की दिशा में पर्याप्त प्रगति हुई है। किन्तु अब भी अनेक ऐसे शक्तिशाली गुट हैं, ऐसे तथाकथित धार्मिक कट्टरता के पोषक हैं, जो अन्य लोगों की धार्मिक, आध्यात्मिक तथा सांस्कृतिक पराधीनता की पुष्टि रामायण के आधार पर करने का प्रयास करते रहते हैं। जबकि सत्य यह है कि इस तर्कसंगत, मानवीय तथा महान ग्रंथ में कहीं एक पंक्ति भी ऐसी नहीं जो जन्म पर आधारित वर्ण-व्यवस्था के पक्ष में हो। इसके विपरीत रामायण में, मानव-मानव के बीच समत्व और भ्रातृभाव का ही संदेश मिलता है। रामायण स्पष्ट रूप से कहती है कि मनुष्य तभी तक किसी वर्ण-विशेष को मानता है, जब तक वह उसी वर्ण के गुणों से विभूषित हो। जिस व्यक्ति में काम, क्रोध, मद, मोह, मत्सर, स्वार्थ, जैसे चारित्रिक दोष हों, उसे ब्राह्मण अथवा ऊंची-जाति का नहीं माना जा सकता। जाति का अर्थ केवल शरीर नहीं, अपितु शरीरी है। जहां व्यक्ति के बाह्य शरीर और उसकी अंतरात्मा एवं चरित्र में अंतर हो, वहां जन्मना उसके उच्च जाति के होने का कोई महत्त्व नहीं है। उच्चकुल में जन्म लेकर भी यदि व्यक्ति की अंतरात्मा कलुषित हो तो उसे उच्चकुल का आदर-सम्मान पाने का कोई अधिकार नहीं है। इस प्रसंग से स्पष्ट है कि रामायण वर्णव्यवस्था के रूढ़िवादी स्वरूप को प्रश्रय नहीं देती, अपितु सद्बुद्धि, सच्चरित्रता एवं पवित्रता पर आधारित वर्ग को अधिक महत्त्व देती है। रामायण के अनुसार उच्च अथवा नीच जाति में जन्म पूर्व-निर्धारित नहीं होता। न ही किसी अजन्मे शिशु को माता-के गर्भ से निकलते ही निम्न कोटि का गान लिया जाता है। हरेक शिशु को अपना जीवन-स्तर सुधारने का, संपूर्ण मनुष्य बनने का सांस्कृतिक, सामाजिक तथा आर्थिक अवसर मिलना चाहिए। इस आशय का संदेश यद्यपि रामायण में स्पष्ट रूप से उल्लिखित नहीं है, तथापि यह उसमें निहित है। और इसीलिए रामायण को सरसरी निगाह से पढ़ लेना पर्याप्त नहीं, उसका गंभीरता से पठन-पाठन और चिंतन अपेक्षित है। विद्वानों को हर बार रामायण के पाठ से नवीन सत्यों की उपलब्धि होती है।

आधुनिक विश्व में अनेक संघर्षों और दुःखों का कारण यह है कि तथाकथित उच्चवर्ग के लोग, बिना सद्गुणों और सद्व्यवहार के, विशिष्ट व्यक्ति होने का दावा करते हैं। यदि ऐसे लोग अपने श्रेष्ठ आचरण से अपनी कुलीनता सिद्ध करें, तो उन्हें विशिष्ट सम्मान अवश्य मिलना चाहिए। किन्तु यदि वे ऐसा नहीं करते तो वे यह अधिकार खो

देते हैं। व्यक्ति को दूसरों का सम्मान तो करना ही चाहिए, साथ ही उसे स्वयं अपना सम्मान करना भी सीखना चाहिए। अपना सम्मान स्वयं करना कठिन कार्य है, विशेषतः उसके लिए जो आत्म-प्रवंचना में लिप्त न हो। शेक्सपियर ने एक स्थान पर कहा है—

"और सब से बढ़कर, व्यक्ति अपने प्रति सच्चा रहे।" अतएव जो लोग राम के सच्चे अनुयायी होने का दावा करते हैं लेकिन राम के आदर्शों के विपरीत घृणा, असहिष्णुता, हिंसा और परपीड़न के अभियान में लगे हैं, उन्हें एक क्षण ठहरकर अपने आचरण की समीक्षा करनी चाहिए। यदि उन्हें अपने आचरण की भूल पर क्षोभ और ग्लानि हो सकी, तभी वे सचमुच रामराज्य की स्थापना में अपना बहुमूल्य योगदान कर सकेंगे। ऐसा रामराज्य फिर से स्थापित कर सकेंगे जहां आध्यात्मिक तथा नैतिक आनंद हो। आनंद की अमृत-स्रोतस्विनी से आप्लावित हो सकेंगे। रामायण के उच्चादर्शों की पुनर्प्रतिष्ठा की चेष्टा में लगे इन लोगों की हिंसात्मक प्रवृत्ति आसुरी स्वभाव की द्योतक है। ये तो राम के नहीं, रावण के अनुयायी जान पड़ते हैं।

मैंने पहले भी रामयण में स्त्री-पुरुष के बीच विभेद न होने की चर्चा की है। अब मैं फिर इसी समसामयिक विषय पर लौट रहा हूं, जिस पर यूरोप और अमरीका के ही नहीं, बल्कि एशिया के भी अनेक चिंतकों का ध्यान केन्द्रित है। रामायण ने नारी को समाज में बड़ा प्रतिष्ठित और महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान दिया है। आज के हमारे समाज में नारी की शारीरिक प्रताड़ना, मानसिक उत्पीड़न तथा शोषण बड़ी आम बात है। इस घरेलू हिंसा ओर स्त्रियों को नीचा समझने की प्रवृत्ति को समाप्त करने की दिशा में हमें भगवान राम के नाम पर हर संभव प्रयास करने होंगे। आदर्श भारतीय नारी में अपेक्षित सभी गुण सीता में विद्यमान हैं। सीता ने पति को पूर्ण सम्मान और प्रेम दिया है और बदले में राम ने उन्हें उच्चासन पर प्रतिष्ठित किया। अपनी बुद्धि, कठिन परिस्थितियों में अपने पावन-व्यवहार तथा मृत्यु के समक्ष भी अपने धैर्य और साहस के कारण सीता पति के इस अनन्य प्रेम की उपयुक्त पात्र सिद्ध होती हैं। राम के लिए सीता पत्नी हैं, सहचरी हैं, मित्र हैं, दासी अथवा वासनापूर्ति का साधन नहीं है। हमें यह कभी नहीं भूलना चाहिए। भूलने वाली बात यह भी नहीं हैं कि पश्चिम की ओर से हुए एक आक्रमण से पहले भारतीय नारी कभी परदे में नहीं रही थी। दुर्भाग्यवश परदे की प्रथा प्रारंभ करने वालों को हमारे ही समाज के कट्टरपंथियों ने प्रश्रय और समर्थन दिया।

नारी के प्रति हिंसा तो उसके जन्म से भी पूर्व आरंभ हो जाती है, जब बालिकाओं को जन्म से पहले ही मारने के प्रयास किए जाते हैं। जन्म के बाद से भी उसे भय, असमंजस और आत्मग्लानि पग-पग पर प्रताड़ित करते हैं। प्रकृति का अपना एक नियम है—स्त्री-पुरुष दोनों ही सृष्टि के लिए आवश्यक हैं। यदि स्त्रियों की इसी तरह निर्ममतापूर्वक हत्या की जाती रही तो सृष्टि कैसी होगी? समाज का अस्तित्व कैसे रहेगा? यदि युवकों की तुलना में युवतियों की संख्या नगण्य हो गई तो उसके कैसे भीषण सामाजिक-आर्थिक

एवं मनोवैज्ञानिक दुष्परिणाम होंगे ? नैतिक मूल्यों का कैसा अधःपतन होगा ? भगवान राम के अनुयायी आज की अहिल्या, अनसूया तथा शबरियों की रक्षा के लिए आगे क्यों नहीं आ रहे हैं ?

रामायण की मूल शिक्षा है—परिवार की प्रतिष्ठा। परिवार समाज का लघुरूप है। समाज की ही भांति परिवार में आचार-व्यवहार के कुछ नियम होते हैं। परिवार में एकता का सूत्र होता है, एक-दूसरे के प्रति अनुराग, एक-दूसरे के साथ मिल-बांट कर रहना, अनुशासन और उत्तरदायित्व होता है। भारत में परिवार का जितना अधिक महत्त्व रहा है, उतना विश्व में और कहीं नहीं है। भारतीय संदर्भ में परिवार की संस्था ने हमें जातिभेद, निर्धनता, विदेशी आक्रमण तथा अपरिचित, अग्राह्य सांस्कृतिक विकृतियों जैसे खतरों के आगे नतमस्तक होने नहीं दिया। यह बड़े दुःख की बात है कि अब हमारे समाज में भी पारिवारिक एकता का महत्व कम हो रहा है और उसकी जगह व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ को महत्त्व दिया जाने लगा है। अब हर व्यक्ति से अपनी लीक स्वयं बनाने की आशा की जाती है। आधुनिकता के नाम पर बड़ों का आदर, नैतिक मूल्यों की प्रतिष्ठा और अपनी संस्कृति का सम्मान समाप्त होता जा रहा है। पिता, भाई, पड़ोसी, नागरिक यहां तक कि मनुष्य की गरिमा को ग्रहण लगता जा रहा है। मेरे जैसे लोग, जिन्होंने जीवन के बहुत से वर्ष भारतीय समाज में बिताए हैं, उनके लिए विदेशों के अपरिचित, असुरक्षित और भिन्न संस्कृति वाले परिवेश में परिवार का महत्त्व और अधिक बढ़ जाता है। ब्रिटेन में हम भारतीयों की कर्मठता और व्यावसायिक तथा शैक्षिक सफलता के कारण तो हमारा सम्मान होता ही है, साथ ही हमारी पारिवारिक भावनाओं के कारण भी हमें प्रशंसा की दृष्टि से देखा जाता है। हमारी इसी पारिवारिक भावना से हमें ऐसी सुरक्षा, स्नेह, आराम और अनुशासन प्राप्त होता है, जिससे परिवार के हर व्यक्ति में दृढ़ता, विश्वास और आशावादिता स्वयमेव आ जाती है। सौभाग्य से, आधुनिकता के तमाम अस्थिर करने वाले प्रभावों के बावजूद, भारत में और भारत से बाहर बसे भारतीयों में परिवार की भावना को कोई ख़तरा नहीं है।

रामायण ने बड़े काव्यात्मक और सुंदर ढंग से हमें परिवार और समाज के लाभों से परिचित कराया है। जब विरोधी, विनाशक, तत्त्वों से हमारा सामना हो, तब परिवार और समाज का महत्त्व और बढ़ जाता है। भगवान् राम पर जब विपत्ति आई, तब अपने परिवार और अपने समाज के सहयोग से ही वे रावण जैसे सबल शत्रु पर विजय पा सके थे।

रामायण हमारे जीवन में एक स्थाई तत्त्व है, जो कभी परिवर्तित नहीं होता। उसके पृष्ठों को हम जब चाहें पलट सकते हैं, उनसे आध्यात्मिक आनंद और नैतिक प्रेरणा प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। रामायण स्त्री-पुरुषों को सतर्क रहना सिखाती है। अपनी स्वतंत्रता की और समुदाय तथा समाज की रक्षा में तत्पर रहना सिखाती है। जॉन डान ने लिखा है—

"कोई व्यक्ति एक पृथक द्वीप नहीं होता।"

रामायण जॉन डान से शताब्दियों पूर्व यह संदेश देती है। हम सब एक-दूसरे से कहीं न कहीं, किसी न किसी तरह जुड़े हुए हैं और सामुदायिक विकास के प्रति उत्तरदायी हैं। पर्वतों की गुफाओं में रहने वाले ऋषि-मुनियों को भी यदा-कदा अपने उस एकान्त से बाहर निकलकर समाज से अन्न तथा सामाजिक सुरक्षा प्राप्त करनी पड़ती है। उन मुमुक्षुओं की बात छोड़ भी दी जाए, जिन्होंने अपने को मानव-समाज से पूरी तरह काट लिया है, किन्तु अन्य सभी को कभी न कभी मानव-समाज से संपर्क स्थापित करना पड़ता है। विशेष रूप से, धीमान व्यक्ति के लिए यही उचित है कि वह नैतिकता का उच्चादर्श स्थापित करे और निर्बलों की रक्षा करे। प्रबल शत्रु बालि के विरुद्ध निर्बल सुग्रीव का पक्ष लेकर भगवान राम ने जिस न्यायप्रियता का परिचय दिया, वैसे उदाहरण कम ही मिलते हैं। बालि नें सुग्रीव के साथ न्यान नहीं किया था। भगवान राम ने न्याय का पक्ष लिया और सुग्रीव को उसका न्यायोचित अधिकार दिलाया। सच पूछा जाए तो यही धर्म का आग्रह था। कोई भी व्यक्ति, चाहे वह कितना ही समर्थ, शक्तिशाली और प्रभावशाली हो, धर्म से बढ़कर नहीं है।

भगवान राम की ही तरह हर व्यक्ति को निःसंग तथा सत्यनिष्ठ होना चाहिए। रामयण में इन आदर्शों का स्पष्ट उल्लेख मिलता है।

व्यक्ति को अपने ही घर में अतिथि की भांति रहना चाहिए। अपने विचारों में भी अतिथि की भांति रहना चाहिए। उसे सदा सत्य के आश्रित रहना चाहिए। वह है कौन ? सत्य ने उसे मिट्टी से गढ़ा है और अग्नि से तपाकर क्षणभंगुर मनुष्य शरीर दिया है। सत्य के बिना वह मिट्टी के ढेले के समान है। उसकी महानता इसी में है कि वह महानता की इच्छा न करे। यदि धन ही प्राप्त करना है तो स्नेह का धन प्राप्त करे, निर्धनता का धन प्राप्त करे। विनम्रता में उत्कर्ष और क्षण में शाश्वत को प्राप्त करे।

जिस भारत-भूमि ने सदाचार और मानवाधिकारों की रक्षा विषयक ऐसा महान दार्शनिक ग्रंथ दिया, वहीं आज मानव की गरिमा को पदलुंठित किया जा रहा है। विश्वामित्र हमें ऐसे कुकृत्यों से अवगत कराते हैं किन्तु हमारी अंतरात्मा के दशरथ हमारे भीतर के रघुनंदन को इन बुराइयों से लड़ने के लिए ऋषि के साथ जाने नहीं देते। इसीलिए आज के विश्व में आसुरी वृत्तियां प्रबल होकर तांडव कर रही हैं। रामायण के अनुसार जब क्षत्रिय, सत्य और धर्म की रक्षा में असमर्थ रहे तब परशुराम के रूप में अवतरित होकर भगवान ने इन तथाकथित संरक्षकों का उन्मूलन किया। और तब भगवान राम का प्रादुर्भाव हुआ, जिन्होंने अपने आचरण से क्षात्र-धर्म की मर्यादा स्थापित की।

किन्तु क्या हमें यही अभीष्ट है कि सृष्टिकर्ता संहारक की भूमिका में अवतरित हो ? भगवान राम का एक भक्त एक कुटी में रहता था। एक रात उसके यहां चोर घुसे। उन्होंने देखा कि राम-लक्ष्मण जैसे दो युवक उस कुटी की रक्षा में सन्नद्ध हैं। सुबह हुई।

चोरों ने उस रामभक्त से पैरों पर गिरकर उनसे क्षमा मांगी और कुटी की रक्षा करते राम-लक्ष्मण के दर्शन की कथा सुनाई। इस पर भक्त की आंखों से अश्रुधारा प्रवाहित हो चली। उन्होंने तत्काल अपना सारा सामान कुटी से बाहर निकाल फेंका। उन्हें इस बात का अत्यंत दुख था कि उनकी जरा-सी संपत्ति की रक्षा के लिए प्रभु को इतना कष्ट उठाना पड़ा।

विश्व के पुण्य, सत्य और धर्म के मार्ग से विचलित होते रहने पर भी निराश नहीं होना चाहिए। यह ध्यान रहना चाहिए कि प्रत्येक समाज में सत् एवं असत्, अच्छाई और बुराई के बीच सतत संघर्ष होता ही रहता है। जहां किसी एक बुराई का दमन किया जाता है, वहीं एक दूसरी बुराई फिर सर उठाने लगती है। देखना सिर्फ यह है कि ये बुराइयां हावी न होने पाएं, अंतिम विजय अच्छाई की ही हो। और इसी संदर्भ में रामायण उन लोगों के लिए प्रेरणास्वरूप है जो विश्व को बेहतर, न्यायपरक एवं सुंदर बनाना चाहते हैं। रामायण का यही संदेश, उसका सत्य और उसकी नैतिक चुनौतियां हमें घर-घर पहुंचाती हैं, ताकि वह विश्व के प्रत्येक स्त्री, पुरुष, बाल-वृद्ध की बहुमूल्य संपत्ति बन जाए।

सोलहवीं शताब्दी में भी विश्व ऐसे ही संकट के दौर से गुज़र रहा था, पाशविक प्रवृत्तियां, सर उठा रही थीं, जब संत तुलसीदास अपने दैवी संदेश के साथ उपस्थित हुए थे। पन्द्रहवीं-सोलहवीं शताब्दी में अनेक व्यक्ति और संप्रदाय अपनी राजनीतिक तथा सैद्धांतिक महत्त्वाकांक्षाओं के लिए देवी-देवताओं के नामों का दुरुपयोग कर रहे थे। अधकचरे विचार, बौद्ध धर्म की अवरुद्ध स्थिति तथा ज़ीवन के प्रति शासकों की निरपेक्षता से समाज में जड़ता, और नैतिक तथा आध्यात्मिक अधःपतन की स्थिति उत्पन्न हो गई थी। मुग़ल बादशाह अकबर की राजनीति के फलस्वरूप सामाजिक निराशा और किंकर्त्तव्यविमूढ़ता व्याप्त हो रही थी, जो राष्ट्र के नैतिक मूल्यों, उसके धर्म के सिद्धांतों को खोखला कर रहा था। इससे लोगों के साथ-साथ पूरे राष्ट्र की विवेक-बुद्धि भ्रमित हो रही थी।

वाल्मीकि की काव्यभाषा थी – संस्कृत। यह लोकभाषा नहीं थी। सामान्य जन द्वारा इसे बोलना-समझना कब का समाप्त हो चुका था। इसीलिए नवीन धर्म दर्शन संस्कृत की अपेक्षा, जनसाधारण द्वारा बोली और समझी जाने वाली लोकभाषाओं में अपने सिद्धांतों का प्रचार करने लगे थे।

हिन्दुओं के लिए यह काल विशेष रूप से कठिन-काल था क्योंकि विजातीय-विधर्मी शक्तियां, उनकी ही धरती पर उनका क्रूरता से दमन कर रही थीं। इसी शताब्दी में अनेक संत कवियों की अमर रचनाएं आयीं। इनमें सूर, तुलसी, गरुनानक, नंददास, मलिक मोहम्मद जायसी, रहीम, रसखान, केशवदास और कबीर प्रमुख हैं।

इस दमन के बावजूद भारतीय साहित्य और दर्शन के इस पुनरुत्थान काल के प्रसिद्ध व्यक्तियों में अनेक मुसलमान भी हैं। स्वाभाविक है कि तुलसीदास और कबीरदास की शिक्षाओं का बड़ा व्यापक प्रभाव पड़ा। दोनों ने ही अपनी बात केवल कुछ बुद्धिजीवियों

तक सीमित नहीं रखी अपितु जनसाधारण को सम्बोधित करके कही। सरल-सुगम्य भाषा में कहे गए उनके संदेश से जनता में शोषण तथा नैतिक, सांस्कृतिक और आध्यात्मिक मूल्यों के पतन के प्रति विरोध की प्रबल भावना जाग उठी!

रामचरित मानस की रचना के बाद तुलसीदास की कीर्ति चतुर्दिक फैल गई। संत कवि नाभादास ने अपनी प्रसिद्ध कृति भक्तमाल में लिखा है – 'कलि कुटिल जीव विस्तार हेतु वाल्मीकि तुलसी भये' – इस कलियुग में जनसाधारण को मुक्ति प्रदान करने के लिए वाल्मीकि ने तुलसी के रूप में जन्म लिया।'' त्रेतायुग में वाल्मीकि ने रामायण की रचना की। इस पावन ग्रंथ का एक अक्षर ब्रह्महत्या के दोष से मुक्त कर सकता है। अब इस युग में उन्होंने प्रभु के प्रताप को, भक्तों की मंगलकामना से पुनः प्रकाशित किया है। और अपने व्रत के अनुसार वे श्रीराम-भक्ति से दिन-रात उन्हीं का नाम जपते रहते हैं। इस तरह उन्होंने असंख्य जन्म-मरण के आवर्तों वाले महासिंधु को पार करने के लिए यह नौका बनाई है, जिससे इस कलियुग के सभी दुखी संतप्त जीवों का उद्धार होगा।''

तुलसी का युग, हमारे युग से बहुत अलग नहीं है। तब की ही तरह आज भी बेईमानी और ईमानदारी, कायरता और वीरता, स्वार्थ और परमार्थ तथा कठोरता और करुणा एक साथ फल-फूल रही है। तुलसी के युग में भी पाप का अंधकार उत्कर्ष पर था। पाशविक प्रवृत्तियां प्रबल थीं। रक्षक ही भक्षक बनते जा रहे थे। धन के चौकीदार स्वयं चोरों को आमंत्रण दे रहे थे। मनुष्य की गरिमा, उसके मौलिक अधिकारों के प्रति कोई आदर-सम्मान नहीं रह गया था। अगले जन्म में सुख पाने के झूठे स्वप्न के आसरे मनुष्य भ्रष्टाचरण में निमग्न था।

दुर्भाग्य से आज के युग में भी झूठे स्वप्न दिखाने वाले उतने ही शक्तिशाली हैं, जितने तुलसी अथवा वाल्मीकि के युग में थे। आधुनिक उपग्रह-तकनीक, रेडियो और टेलीविजन के माध्यम से हजारों लाखों मील दूर बैठे लोगों तक अपना संदेश क्षण भर में पहुंचाया जा सकता है। जिस तरह बोलने की स्वतंत्रता का दुरुपयोग करते हुए बहुत से पतनोन्मुख संदेश घर-घर पहुंचाए जा रहे हैं, इनमें से कुछ तो बेहद अनैतिक और आपत्तिजनक हैं। उसी तरह रामायण की शिक्षा भी घर-घर पहुंचाई जा सकती है। अभी कुछ वर्ष पूर्व ऐसा एक प्रयास किया गया जब रामायण पर आधारित फिल्म-शृंखला का निर्माण और प्रसारण हुआ। दो वर्ष तक इस फिल्म ने भारत और विदेशों में बसे भारतीय मूल के लोगों को मंत्रमुग्ध किया। इसी कारण इस महान कृति के निर्माता-निर्देशक रामानंद सागर की तुलना वाल्मीकि और तुलसीदास तक से की गई। जब दूरदर्शन पर इसका प्रसारण होता था, तब लोग अपने कामकाज बंद कर इसका आनंद लेते थे। इसमें काम करने वाले अभिनेता-अभिनेत्री घर-घर में चर्चित हुए। यहां तक कि इसी जनाधार के सहारे इनमें से कुछ भारतीय संसद में निर्वाचित हुए।

दस वर्ष पूर्व, भगवान राम के एक विनीत भक्त ने अपनी अंतरात्मा की पुकार पर, विश्व के लिए सर्वश्रेष्ठ उपहार—रामायण के सत्य को साथ लिये विश्व-भ्रमण आरंभ

किया। अपने सीमित साधनों तथा दुर्बल काया के बावजूद उनमें अपार साहस था। उन्होंने रामायण को विश्व के सर्वोच्च बौद्धिक तथा शैक्षिक केन्द्रों तक पहुँचाया। वे अनुपम राम भक्त हैं—पंडित लल्लन प्रसाद व्यास। दस वर्ष पूर्व उन्होंने अपने सम्माननीय तथा महत्त्वपूर्ण पत्रकारिता के पद को छोड़कर रामायण के संदेश को विश्वव्यापी बनाने का संकल्प किया। तबसे इस निश्छल सत्यनिष्ठ, सर्वथा निःस्वार्थ और समर्पित व्यक्ति ने भारत के महानतम ग्रंथ रामायण की देदीप्यमान शिक्षा को एशिया, अमरीका, दक्षिण अमरीका, कनाडा, यूरोप और सुदूर पूर्व के धर्म-दर्शन केन्द्रों तक पहुँचाने में प्रशंसनीय भूमिका निभाई है।

श्री व्यास ने एक और दिशा में भी श्लाघनीय प्रयास किया है। विदेशों में बसे प्रवासी भारतीयों की एक समूची पीढ़ी, जो अब तक रामायण के दार्शनिक पोषण और मधुर संगीत से वंचित थी, उसे गीत-संगीत में निबद्ध-रामायण की कथा से परिचित कराया। उन्हीं की प्रेरणा से अनेक गायकों-संगीतकारों ने रामकथा का अमृत लाखों भारतवंशियों तक पहुँचाया, जिसके लिए वे सदैव श्री व्यास के आभारी रहेंगे। विदेशों में श्री मुरारी बापू, श्री रोमेश ओझा, जैसे विद्वज्जनों के सफल कार्यक्रमों के पीछे भी श्री व्यास के अथक प्रयत्नों की भूमिका है। (यद्यपि श्री व्यास विनम्रतावश मेरे अपने इस निष्कर्ष से सहमत नहीं हैं)।

श्री लल्लन प्रसाद व्यास का कहना है—

आज जब प्राचीन व्यवस्था ध्वस्त हो रही है और पाश्चात्य जगत अभी किसी नई व्यवस्था की कल्पना भी नहीं कर पा रहा है, ऐसे में जब इस बहुमुखी व्याधि का निदान खोजने में विश्व अपने को असमर्थ पाता है, तब हमें रामायण का ध्यान हो आता है। वही रामायण जिसमें शासक स्वयं आध्यात्मिक मूल्यों द्वारा शासित होता है। रामचरित मानस में भगवान राम अपने प्रजाजनों से कहते हैं कि—

"नहिं अनीति नहिं कछु प्रभुताई, सुनहुँ करहु जो तुमहिं सुहाई।
जौ अनीति कछु भाषहु भाई, तौ मोहि बरजहु भय बिसराई॥

लेकिन जो लोग सत्ता में हैं अथवा जो सत्ता में आने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं, वे किसी प्रकार के विरोध अथवा असहमति को सहन नहीं कर सकते। जो भी उनकी स्वार्थपरक भौतिक महत्त्वाकांक्षाओं के रास्ते में आता है, उसे जेलों में ठूंस दिया जाता है। लेकिन इतिहास साक्षी है कि नैतिक विचारों वाले साहसी व्यक्ति सदा ऐसे दमनचक्र का विरोध करते आए हैं। हमारे अपने युग में जर्मनी में नाज़ीवाद का पतन हुआ, परजीवी साम्राज्यवादी शक्तियों की पराजय हुई और रंगभेद की नीति का मानमर्दन हुआ। मंडेला, बॉनहोफर, गांधी और नेहरू जैसे लोगों ने जान की परवाह किए बिना अत्याचार और अन्याय का डटकर विरोध किया। मानव-इतिहास के पृष्ठों में उनके नाम स्वर्णाक्षरों में अंकित किए जाएंगे। ऐसे लोगों ने सिद्ध कर दिया कि मनुष्य की आत्मा, किसी क़ैद, किसी बंधन, किसी यातना-शिविर में बंधकर नहीं रह सकती। कोई जंजीर इतनी मज़बूत

नहीं है और न ही कोई यातना इतनी असहनीय कि वह स्वाधीनता की भावना को सदा के लिए दबा सके ।

हम एक बार फिर मानवीय ज्ञान-विज्ञान के उत्स, भगवान राम की शिक्षाओं की ओर लौटते हैं, जिन पर महान रामभक्त श्री लल्लन प्रसाद व्यास ने प्रकाश डाला है ।

कभी-कभी अत्याचार का कष्ट इतना बढ़ जाता है कि व्यक्ति स्वयं अपनी मृत्यु की कामना करने लगता है । लेकिन रामायण ऐसी घोर निराशा की स्थिति से उबरने की प्रेरणा देती है । अत्याचार का अंधकार तभी व्यापक हो उठता है, जब अच्छाई चौकस नहीं रहती या विरोध करना छोड़ देती है । हिट्लर समझता था कि उसका क्रूर, रक्तरंजित शासन हजार वर्षों तक चलेगा । आज के समय में भी अनेक अत्याचारी शासकों को कुछ ऐसा ही भुग़ालता है । लेकिन ऐसे तमाम लोगों को चाहे वे एशिया के हों या यूरोप के, अमरीका, अफ्रीका या आस्ट्रेलिया के, रामायण के इन अमर शब्दों को याद रखना चाहिए ।

जहां भूमि राजाविहीन होती है वहाँ गरजने-चमकने के बावजूद मेघ वर्षा नहीं करते । वहां पुत्र पिता का और पत्नी पति का आदर नहीं करती । वहां लोग सभाएं नहीं करते; न उधान और मंदिर आदि बनवाते हैं । वहां धनाढ्य लोग सुरक्षित नहीं रहते, किसान और ग्वाले तक द्वार बंद कर सोते हैं । वहां नदियों में जल और वनों में घास नहीं रहती । जैसे बिना ग्वाले के गायें होती हैं, उसी तरह बिना राजा का राज्य होता है ।

नाराज के जनपदे विद्युन्माली महास्वनः ।
नाराज के पितुः पुत्रो भार्या वा वर्तते वशः ॥
नाराज के जनपदे कारयन्ति सभां नराः ।
उद्यानानि च रम्याणि दृष्टाः पुण्यगृहाणि च ॥
नाराज के जनपदे धनवन्तः सुरक्षिताः ।
शेरते विवृतद्वाराः कृषिगोरक्षजीवितः ॥
यथा व्यनुदका नद्यो यथा वाऽप्यतृणं वनम् ।
अगोपाला यथा गावस्तथा राष्ट्रमराजकम् ॥

रामायण अत्याचारी को अपदस्थ करने का कोई सरल सुगम मार्ग नहीं सुझाती । रामायण में वर्णित अच्छाई और बुराई के संघर्ष के दौरान युद्धस्थल में भूलुंठित शवों में दुष्टों के साथ-साथ सज्जनों के भी शव हैं । इस संघर्ष में भाग लेने वाले यह जानते थे कि हो सकता है कि वे कभी लौटकर अपने प्रियजनों को न देख पाएं, किन्तु स्वधीनता और न्याय के प्रति उनकी प्रतिबद्धता ने उन्हें युद्ध के लिए उत्प्रेरित किया । रामायण के इन्हीं उदाहरणों से स्पष्ट है कि अच्छाई और बुराई के इस संघर्ष में वे ही प्रतिभागी हो सकते हैं जो शुद्ध, पवित्र तथा सत्यनिष्ठ हैं । रामायण मूल पाप की प्रचलित अवधारणा का खंडन करती है । जैसा कि व्यास जी ने बताया ।

प्राचीन भारतीय शास्त्रों में सर्वोत्तम राजनीतिक प्रणाली वही मानी गई है, जहां

दंड-व्यवस्था ही न हो। जब यह मान लिया जाए कि कोई व्यक्ति दण्डनीय कार्य नहीं करेगा तब दंड की आवश्यकता ही नहीं होगी। संस्कृत में दंड शब्द सज़ा के साथ-साथ गृहत्यागी संन्यासी के दंड का भी द्योतक है। गोस्वामी तुलसीदास ने रामचरितमानस में लिखा है कि "रामराज्य में दंड के नाम पर केवल संन्यासी के डंडे का ही अस्तित्व है। दूसरे किसी अर्थ में वहां दंड है ही नहीं।" अर्थात् अपराध और उसके फलस्वरूप दिए जाने वाले दंड की कोई आवश्यकता ही नहीं थी।

हमने पहले भी समाज की, एक बड़े परिवार के रूप में कल्पना की है। व्यास जी ने 'वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्' अथवा संपूर्ण विश्व की एक बड़े परिवार के रूप में व्याख्या की है।

इस संदर्भ में रामायण का यही संदेश है कि जब शासन ऐसे व्यक्ति या व्यक्तियों के हाथ में हो, जो आध्यात्मिक अथवा मानवीय मूल्यों के लिए प्रतिबद्ध हो और जो उन्हें व्यावहारिक रूप दे सकते हों, तब वातावरण अनुकूल हो जाता है और प्रकृति सर्वत्र मंगलमयी हो उठती है। मानवीय संबंध मधुर हो जाते हैं और सारा विश्व एक परिवार के समान जान पड़ता है।

कोई भी रचना, चाहे कितनी ही महान या महत्त्वपूर्ण क्यों न हो, समय-सापेक्ष होने पर आदरणीय नहीं रह जाती। महान रचना वही होती है जो काल-निरपेक्ष हो। इसीलिए रामायण की अद्वितीय प्रतिभा, दूरदृष्टि ज्ञान, काव्यात्मक करुणा एवं मानवीय पक्ष उसे ऐसी महान रचना के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित करते हैं जो सहस्रों वर्ष पूर्व लिखी जाने पर भी वर्तमान शताब्दी के अंतिम वर्षों की अशांत, दिग्भ्रमित परिस्थितियों में ही नहीं अपितु आने वाली शताब्दियों में भी प्रासंगिक रहेगी।

हम मानव के विकास क्रम में एक उच्चस्तर स्थिति की चर्चा बहुधा किया करते हैं। उसी प्रकार एक अन्य स्थिति है, जो मनुष्य के लिए कष्टसाध्य भले हो—अप्राप्य नहीं है। वह स्थिति है—मानव के विकास का चरमोत्कर्ष, उसकी सर्वोच्च स्थिति। दूर से देखने पर वह एवरेस्ट शिखर की भाँति दुर्लंध्य, दुष्प्राप्य भले दिखती हो, किन्तु हमें यह नहीं भूलना चाहिए कि प्रयत्न करने से एवरेस्ट–विजय संभव हुई है। इसी तरह विनीत भाव से, यह याद रखते हुए कि मनुष्य स्वभाव से पापी नहीं होता, और रामायण की शिक्षाओं का अनुसरण करते हुए हम यदि निरंतर प्रयासरत रहें, तो हम मानव के चरमोत्कर्ष, उसके एवरेस्ट शिखर तक भले न पहुँच पाएं किन्तु इस विश्व को निश्चय ही एक श्रेष्ठतर स्थान बना सकेंगे। एक ऐसा स्थान, जहां तलवारों से हल और भालों से दरांती का काम लिया जाएगा। जहां एक राष्ट्र दूसरे राष्ट्र के विरुद्ध शस्त्र नहीं उठायेगा, जहां युद्ध का पाठ नहीं पढ़ाया जाएगा। जहां सब अपने-अपने फलदायी वृक्ष-लताओं की छाया में निर्भय बैठे होंगे। जहां न्याय, करुणा और प्रेम का साम्राज्य होगा और मानव देवताओं के साथ कदम-से-कदम मिलाकर चलेगा।

परिवार में देशद्रोही होने के कारण लंका नष्ट हो गई (रामायण में जब राम से युद्ध हो रहा था, रावण का भाई विभीषण शत्रु से मिल गया)

यदि अपने व्यक्तियों में कोई देशद्रोही होगा तो नाश हो जाएगा।
या
महिमा घटी समुद्र की रावण बसो/बसा पड़ोस।

समुद्र की महिमा इसलिए कम हो गई क्योंकि उसके निकट रावण रहता था बुरे पड़ोस के कारण आपकी ख्याति को क्षति पहुंचती है।

निम्नलिखित कहावतों को लोकोक्तिओं के रूप में कतई वर्गीकृत नहीं किया जा सकता क्योंकि उनमें रामायण के मुख्य चरित्रों की ऐसी भूमिका का संकेत किया जा रहा है जो सबको ज्ञात है तथा उनका प्रयोग सामान्यीकरण करने वाले ढंग से विशेष परिस्थितियों में भी किया जाता है।
यहां उनका उल्लेख किया जा सकता है :

*'सब रामायण पढ़ गए सीता केरी जोय'?*

आपने सब तरह से रामायण पढ़ ली है लेकिन आपको यह पता नहीं है कि सीता किसकी पत्नी थीं।
या
*'सारी रामायण हो चुकी सीता किसकी जोय?'*
आपने संपूर्ण रामायण पढ़ ली है किंतु यह पता नहीं है कि सीता किसकी पत्नी थी?
या *''सारी रामायण पढ़ गए पर यह न जाना कि राम राक्षस था या रावण?''*
आपने सारी रामायण पढ़ ली है पर यह पता नहीं लगा कि राम राक्षस था या रावण।

इन कहावतों का प्रयोग ऐसे व्यक्ति के लिए व्यंग्यात्मक रूप में किया जा सकता है जो कुछ भी नहीं समझता हो या समझ पाया हो, यद्यपि विषय की पूर्ण शिक्षा दी गई हो क्योंकि भारत में प्रत्येक व्यक्ति सीता, राम या रावण की भूमिका करने के बारे में जानता है। यहां, हिंदी भाषा के विशेष क्षेत्रों को प्रभावित करनेवाली सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि के रूप में रामायण का संक्षिप्त सर्वेक्षण देना ही पर्याप्त होगा। इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं है कि उदाहरणों की सूची और अधिक विस्तृत हो सकती थी और यह भी निश्चित रूप से कहा जा सकता है कि जो तुलनात्मक शब्द (रूपक, लक्षणा आदि) लिए गए हैं उनका विस्तृत विश्लेषण किया जा सकता था। परंतु हमारा यह लक्ष्य नहीं था, हम तो केवल विषय-वस्तु के रोचक पक्षों पर विचार करना चाहते थे।

अंत में हम संक्षेप में कुछ कहना चाहेंगे कि हमारे विषय के संबंध में शब्दकोश

# SITA DEWI FORSWORN: AN UTTARAKANDA EPISODE IN THE MALAY <u>WAYANG KULIT SIAM</u>

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Previous writings on the subject have established the existence of several literary as well as folk versions of the Hindu epic, Ramayana, in the Malay peninsula. These include at least two versions utilised in the Kelantanese shadow play, Wayang Kulit Siam. Several others have recently come to light i Kedah where another version of the shadow play, Wayang Gedek, a derivative of the Thai Nang Talung is popular.

In Kelantan, the principal home of the most important Malay shadow puppet theatre style, Wayang Kulit Siam, Ramayana episodes are generally considered by puppeteers (dalang) as belonging to two categories -- those dealing respectively with fundamental events contained in the epic, and those regarded as extensions or offshoots of its principal theme. To distinguish the two varieties, an ingenious tree metaphor is commonly utilised. Fundamental episodes derived from the main plot are, in this system, described as constituting the trunk (pokok) while others are termed branch (ranting), twig (dahan), leaf (daun) or flower (bunga) episodes, depending upon their distance from the epic's main plot and the character therein appearing. For the purpose of convenience, however, the term ranting is generally taken to include all these non-fundamental episodes.

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Generally, events up to and including the rescue of Sita Dewi from Langkapuri and the return of the victorious Seri Rama to Ayodhya constitute the culmination of the principal plot. These events coincide with the six _kanda_ not including the final section, _Uttarakanda_. As in the case of the Valmiki Ramayana, then, the events mentioned here mark the completion of the story. Those events depicted in the _Uttarakanda_ have been considered, even in Indian versions of the epic, as possible later accresions. Interestingly, the Malay _dalang_ too considers these events as rightfully belonging to the _ranting_ cycle rather then to the epic principal plot even though they contain events relatively close to the main story. Such episodes, in the manner of much else that the Malay traditional theatre has absorbed, are considerably elaborated with wholly invented ideas utilising themes or motifs from a vast corpus of non-Ramayana material, including the colourful Panji cycle, a mediaeval Javanese romance popular in _Wayang Kulit Siam_ territories, and known too in variant versions in Thailand and Cambodia, where Panji, the hero, is renamed Inao.

The present paper will examine the episode of Sita Dewi's rejection briefly mentioned in Valmiki, a rejection due, in his version, to scandals persisting after the couple's return to Ayodhya despite Sita Dewi's dramatic trial by fire, witnessed by gods and men, from which she has emerged brilliantly unscatched. The story of Sita Dewi's rejection and her eventual reconciliation to her husband through a second marriage forms an integral part of ritual (_berjamu_) _Wayang Kulit Siam_ performances which are infinitely more important than normal ones, as will presently become apparent. First, however, it seems appropriate to present here a brief synopsis of the story _Sita Dewi Dihalau_ (_Sita Dewi Forsworn_).

## 2. SITA DEWI DIHALAU

After Seri Rama and Siti Dewi return from Langkapuri following the defeat of Maharaja Wana, the royal couple live happily in Siusia Mendarapura. After some time, however, Seri Rama, feeling unwell, calls before him his brothers, Laksemana and his officers and soldiers. He tells Laksemana that he wishes to go the pleasure garden, Taman Banjaran Sari, to ritually cleanse himself in the pond in that garden, for it is likely that his illness has been caused by contact with all kinds of negative influence during his mission to Langkapuri. He has also crossed over thousands of dead bodies, both of humans and spirits (mambang) during his mission. Seri Rama then informs Siti Dewi that he is on his way to Taman Banjaran Sari, explaining the reason for the special ceremonial bath. To a question from Siti Dewi, he responds that he will be away for perhaps three days and that his companions will be his brother Laksemana, and his two faithful attendants, Pak Dogol and Wak Long. Upon bidding farewell to Siti Dewi and completing their preparations, Seri Rama and his companions leave.

The group reaches Taman Banjaran Sari. The pond, Seri Rama notices, is covered with leaves and other debris. He orders Wak Long to clean the pond's surface, so that he can bathe in it. Wak Long as ordered, and having completed his task, comes before Seri Rama with a salutation (sembah) gesture indicating he has completed the job. Soon, Seri Rama is in the pond with his companions.

Meanwhile, back at the palace in Siusia Mendarapura, a demon from Maharaja Rawana's camp, now disguised as an old lady, Mak Inang Kebelat, visits Siti Dewi, piously intent, no matter what the cost, to separate Siti Dewi and Seri Rama. Having heard that the Queen has returned from Sri Langkapuri, she lies, she would like to return to the palace to serve Siti Dewi once again, as she did before her mistress's kidnapping by Maharaja Rawana. Siti Dewi allows her to stay at the palace. After having been there for a while, she asks Siti Dewi to tell her how the Queen's stay in Langkapuri, with Maharaja Wana, had been. Siti Dewi replies that she has no wish to speak of that incident, particularly because living in another's land, no matter how good, can never be the same as living in one's own country. After some further instigation from the dayang, Siti Dewi states that another reason for her strong dislike of Langkapuri is total hatred for Maharaja Wana.

The dayang then asks Siti Dewi to give some indication of Maharaja Rawana's appearance. Siti Dewi replies to this that Rawana was ugly; in fact he was so ugly that there is nothing to which his ugliness can be compared. His nose, for instance, was very much like a half - skinned betel nut. Having started on the subject the dayang now leads Siti Dewi on. She urges the queen to draw a sketch of Rawana. At first all manner of persuasion fails. The dayang promises secrecy, indicating that only she herself and Siti Dewi will know of the existence of such a portrait, and of course, it can always be destroyed once she has seen it. Siti Dewi refuses to undertake the drawing. Mak Inang Kebelat then weeps, saying that it appears that Siti Dewi does not care for her, even to grant such a simple wish, and so she will no longer stay to serve the queen. At this, Siti Dewi softens somewhat, and persuaded at last, she agrees to make a drawing of Maharaja Wana. She insists, however that the dayang solemnly promise not to tell Seri Rama or anyone else about it. The promise is soon secured. Taking a piece of paper, Siti Dewi then draws the portrait of the demon king of Langkapuri, beginning with the head and going on to the nose, mouth, eyes, neck and so on.

Meanwhile at the pond in Taman Banjaran Sari, Seri Rama feels a burning sensation which affects his whole body. Leaving the pond he climbs onto dry ground and his whole body aches.

He wonders what could be the matter. Wak Long and even the wise Pak Dogol are unable to explain the sudden malady. Finally at the suggestion of Laksemana, they all agree that the best thing to do in the circumstances would be to take the king back to his palace, and to see then, what else can be done. So they bring Seri Rama back to his palace. Upon reaching the palace gates, Wak Long calls aloud for Siti Dewi, telling her to prepare Seri Rama's carpeted couch as Seri Rama is ill and they wish to bring him in to allow him to rest. Siti Dewi, who is still trying to complete the portrait of Maharaja Wana, is utterly shocked to hear Wak Long call. Since Seri Rama's return is so sudden, she has no means of getting rid of the portrait which is still in her hands. She quickly hides it under Seri Rama's mattress.

The hero, now brought into the chamber, is made to lie down upon his couch by his attendants (pengasuh). Seri Rama, however, is unable to rest. He feels that his mysterious illness is, in fact, intensifying. Surprised at this worsening of his health, he suspects that some object in the room must be responsible. Laksemana, Pak Dogol, Wak Long and even Siti Dewi are requested to make a thorough search in the room, for some concealed object (benda) must be responsible for his affliction. Laksemana and the two companions of Seri Rama now begin their search, and after some time the freshly-drawn portrait is discovered. As soon as it is removed from under

the mattress, Seri Rama feels better. The picture now seen by him, he calls Siti Dewi and asks her who painted it. The queen explains that she did. This infuriates Seri Rama. He tells Siti Dewi that he believed she had forgotten the demon king of Langkapuri, but it looks as if he was mistaken. "It appears that you still remember him fondly, perhaps even love him." He concludes by telling her that since this is the way she wishes to behave, he can no longer allow her to stay with him. Seri Rama then beats her, with eighty strokes, and drags her up to the palace. She cries; her face as well as her head are swollen. Seri Rama, not satisfied, steps upon her and kicks her violently, until she is almost dead. His violence somewhat abated, Seri Rama orders Laksemana to take Sita Dewi with him into the forest and wide open spaces, and there to kill her. Having done so he is to remove her heart (hati). "I am certain her heart/liver will be no different from that of a dog," he says. Seri Rama will not allow anyone to contradict his orders. He threatens to break off his connections with anyone who dies so; to kill anyone who dares to disobey him.

Siti Dewi prepares to leave with Laksemana. She asks for forgiveness from her husband as well as the citizens of Siusia Mendarapura, for she believes her end is near. She feels certain that there will be no escape from Laksemana's arrow. The people of Siusia Mendarapura are in tears as Laksemana leads Siti Dewi out of the palace and Seri Rama's

territories towards the wide open spaces and the forests.

Arriving at padang luas saujana padang, Laksemana asks Siti Dewi to recall in her heart all her spiritual learning, in preparation for her death. He also asks for her forgiveness both for himself and for the members of the shadow play troupe for having to treat her in this unpleasant and unjust manner. Once this has been done, Siti Dewi, covering her head with her shawl (kain kelumbung), begins to cry. Laksemana, places his arrow in readiness in his bow. Taking aim he releases it but the arrow does not hurt Siti Dewi. It is lost and in its place, miraculously, rice descends before the queen. A second attempt on the part of Laksemana attains similar result. The arrow disappears and this time flour comes down. The third arrow suffers a similar fate, disappearing into thin air. In its place descend a large variety of clothes. These are signs not only of Siti Dewi's innocence, but also portents that the child she is carrying is going to be a very fortunate one.

Laksemana, now approaching Siti Dewi, advises her to go to the house of Maharisikala, her father, at Wat Tujuh Kadi Bermas, Siti Dewi is concerned that Seri Rama will get upset with him for having failed in his duty to kill her and to obtain her heart (hati) for him. Laksemana says he will deal with the situation when he returns to the palace at Siusia Mendarapura. He asks for her forgiveness and she too

does the same. Thus they part from each other, Siti Dewi proceeding on her way to Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas and Laksemana returning to Siusia Mendarapura.

Dewa Betara Guru, who is in the sky country (kayangan), comes to know of Seri Rama's order to Laksemana. If Siti Dewi is killed, the heart must be taken back to the palace for Seri Rama to see. Deeply concerned now that Seri Rama will be angry with Laksemana, Betara Guru calls Betara Indera Dewa before him and orders him to descend to earth. Taking the shape of a black dog, the god is to cross Laksemana's path. Obeying Betara Guru, Bentara Indera Indera Guru, is soon traversing Laksemana's path in the required form. Noticing the dog, Laksemana immediately gets the idea that if he kills it, and extricating its liver presents it upon arrival at Siusia Mendarapura Seri Rama, his dilemma will be resolved. Thus he kills the dog with an arrow and cutting open its carcass, removes its hati. Reaching Siusia Mendarapura he appears before Seri Rama and hands him the heart, The latter asks repeatedly if Laksemana has indeed killed Siti Dewi; each time Laksemana replies in the affirmative.

Believing that Siti Dewi has actually been killed, Seri Rama is full of regret at his action in so rashly sentencing her. He cries, and as the days pass, he behaves like someone who has lost his mind. He keeps calling Siti Dewi's name day and night, weeping all the while. This causes great deal

of difficulty in the palace. Everyone is concerned at the king's behaviour as well as remorseful and shocked at Siti Dewi's supposed death.

Many attempts are made to extricate the truth from Laksemana, who stubbornly refuses to change his story regarding Siti Dewi. Finally, he reveals the truth to Pak Dogol. Pak Dogol tells Sagariwa, the Minister, who in turn discusses the situation with other court officials. Finally a decision is made to make a full disclosure to Seri Rama for if this is not done, the king will not stop his lamentations. There is a real danger that Seri Rama may become insane. Sagariwa then informs Seri Rama that Siti Dewi is still alive. He even volunteers to go personally to Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas to bring her back to Siusia Mendarapura. After some time Seri Rama becomes normal again.

Sagariwa proceeds to Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas to meet Maharisi. Maharisi, however, does not wish to get involved in the incident. It appears to him unreasonable that Rama, who has insulted and physically beaten up Siti Dewi, who has driven her out as a result of a mere suspicion,should now want her back. Maharisi feels Sagariwa should meet Siti Dewi personally, and deal directly with her. "If she is prepared to return to Seri Rama, well and good" Maharisi says. If she is not, he himself is not in any position to do or say anything. Sagariwa, meets Siti Dewi and tries to persuade her to return to her husband.

She is adamant and Sagariwa is soon back in Siusia Mendarapura where he reports to Seri Rama on his unsuccessful mission to Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas.

Further discussions take place on the crisis. Finally Pak Dogol gives a suggestion which, it seems, may work. Pak Dogol feels that the only way to succed in getting Siti Dewi back in for them to think up a ruse. Seri Rama will be required to conceal himself, and a message will have to be sent to Siti Dewi that Seri Rama is dead, with an indication that this will be her only available opportunity to pay her last respects to him as the king is to be buried (disimpan) soon. Seri Rama agrees to go along with the plan. Pak Dogol gives instructions for the king to be wrapped up in seven layers of cloth, the idea being that as soon as Siti Dewi arrives, she will have to remove the "shroud" layer by layer. When the final layer is removed, Seri Rama should quickly awaken and hold her. Pak Dogol's plan is accepted, as also is accepted his suggestion that Hanuman Kera Putih must act as the messenger to Siti Dewi. The plan accepted by all, Hanuman Kera Putih is called in to be briefed on the matter. Hanuman leaves for Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas while other preparations are underway in Siusia Mendarapura.

Hanuman Kera Putih meets Siti Dewi, and having exchanged greetings, he tells her that the people (rakyat) of Siusia Mendarapura have specially sent him to inform her that Seri

Rama is dead. If she wishes to go and see his father, this is the time to do so, for the king is soon to be buried. Siti Dewi is shocked at the news of Seri Rama's 'death'. She asks for how long the king was ill before his death, and Hanuman makes up the story that Seri Rama had in fact been ill for quite some time. Siti Dewi completely believing Hanuman makes her preparations to go with him. Upon reaching the palace in Siusia Mendarapura where Seri Rama's "body" is "lying in state",she begins to remove the layers of cloth in which the hero has been wrapped. When she has finally removed the seventh layer, Seri Rama, quickly moving his arms, wishes to hold her, She is shocked. Screaming, she quickly transforms herself into a white bird (burung nelayan putih) and flies off. Hanuman, taking the form of another bird, burung terkukur, gives chase but fails to catch her. Reaching a very high level in the skies, she now descends into a pond at Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas assuming here the form of a fish, anak seruan bermas. Hanuman too descends to the ground and regains his normal shape. Not knowing what to do, he goes before Maharisi and cries. Maharisi, as before, indicates that he can do nothing. Hanuman must deal directly with Siti Dewi. Hanuman returns to Siusia Mendarapura, where further consultations take place on the matter of Siti Dewi's return.

Seri Rama is upset and very depressed. Meanwhile, in Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas, Siti Dewi, who has regained her normal shape, is nearing the completion of her pregnancy. Soon she gives birth to a son who is born together with an arrow (panah). The seven heavenly midwives (bidan) who attend to Siti Dewi name the child Kusi before returning to their abode in the sky (kayangan).

One day, Siti Dewi, leaving the baby in its cot in the care of Maharisi proceeds to a pond to wash clothes. On the way, she notices several monkeys in a forest, their children clinging to them. Feeling ashamed at having left her child at home and not even behaving like the responsible monkeys, she at once decides to fetch Kusi. Reaching home, she finds the child asleep and Maharisi missing. She takes her son with her to the pond, to be with her while she does her washing.

Maharisi, returning, finds the child missing. Fearing that Siti Dewi will be upset if she finds her child lost, he decides to create another one to replace Kusi. Taking hold of certain lemon grass (serai) leaves, he makes another child exactly like Kusi and places it in the cot. Siti Dewi, returning, discovers the second child, and explains the disappearance of the first. Maharisi is prepared to return the second baby into serai, but Siti Dewi decides it should live and become a companion to Kusi. The child is named Serawi.

When the two princes grow up, they ask Siti Dewi regarding their father. She tells them about Seri Rama and also about their uncle Laksemana and Hanuman, their brother. One day Kusi and Serawi go to padang luas saujana padang to play, taking along their bows and arrows. They reach the forest, and soon passing through it are in Siusia Mendarapura. One of the trees they shoot with their arrows falls into the palace grounds, and Seri Rama's horse, shocked, runs away from its enclosure into the forest, where Kusi and Serawi notice it. They play with it and decide to keep the horse. A search, however, soon brings the whereabouts of the horse to light. Pak Dogol and Wak Long ask for the animal but the boys refuse to surrender it. A battle breaks out between the two young princes on one side and Pak Dogol and Wak Long on the other. Pak Dogol and Wak Long, who are defeated, report to Sagariwa, who now goes to demand the horse from Kusi and Serawi together with Anila and Anggada as well as a large retinue of Siusia Mendarapura citizens. Attempts to arrest Kusi and Serawi fail, and the soldiers lose in the battle with the youngsters. Finally, Hanuman manages to capture Kusi and Serawi. They are brought before Seri Rama who beats them with eighty strokes, following which they are dragged on the floor. In pain they call out their mother's name, and Seri Rama, hearing Siti Dewi being named, asks the boys for details regarding their parentage. He thus learns that they

When the two princes grow up, they ask Siti Dewi regarding their father. She tells them about Seri Rama and also about their uncle Laksemana and Hanuman, their brother. One day Kusi and Serawi go to padang luas saujana padang to play, taking along their bows and arrows. They reach the forest, and soon passing through it are in Siusia Mendarapura. One of the trees they shoot with their arrows falls into the palace grounds, and Seri Rama's horse, shocked, runs away from its enclosure into the forest, where Kusi and Serawi notice it. They play with it and decide to keep the horse. A search, however, soon brings the whereabouts of the horse to light. Pak Dogol and Wak Long ask for the animal but the boys refuse to surrender it. A battle breaks out between the two young princes on one side and Pak Dogol and Wak Long on the other. Pak Dogol and Wak Long, who are defeated, report to Sagariwa, who now goes to demand the horse from Kusi and Serawi together with Anila and Anggada as well as a large retinue of Siusia Mendarapura citizens. Attempts to arrest Kusi and Serawi fail, and the soldiers lose in the battle with the youngsters. Finally, Hanuman manages to capture Kusi and Serawi. They are brought before Seri Rama who beats them with eighty strokes, following which they are dragged on the floor. In pain they call out their mother's name, and Seri Rama, hearing Siti Dewi being named, asks the boys for details regarding their parentage. He thus learns that they are his sons.

Having confirmed their true identity, Seri Rama now sends them on a mission to Siti Dewi. Through them he passes a message that he wants her to return to him. When Siti Dewi gets the message through her sons, she indicates that she is prepared to return to Seri Rama, since he insists on a reconciliation, but the king must be prepared to satisfy several conditions. The king has to build for her a palace with forty posts/legs and provide cloth to cover the ground (pelapik) for her feet as she goes from Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas to Siusia Mendarapura. Seri Rama must also supply all other items, including clothing and jewellery, that are normally provided when a wedding takes place. This message is conveyed to Seri Rama by Kusi and Serawi. Seri Rama accepts Siti Dewi's demands, and this acceptance is conveyed to her by the two youngsters. The two boys make two further trips to confirm the conditions and their acceptance by Seri Rama. Following this settlement, the final part of berjamu performance of Wayang Kulit takes place. This in effect is a wedding to which various guests are invited. Details regarding the technique utilised appear in the relevant section of this paper dealing with the berjamu performance.

## 3. COMPARISON WITH THE LITERARY VERSION

The following is a tabulated presentation of the principal events as found in the Wayang Kulit Siam version of the story and as depicted in the principal literary versions of Roorda van Eysinga and Shellabear. It will become immediately apparent that while there are interesting differences, the Wayang Kulit Siam version becomes much more dramatic. Detailed comparisons of these two versions with others in the neighbouring Southeast Asian countries such as Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia will undoubtedly be an interesting exercise, revealing parallels, differences and possible influences. Such a comparative study, however, is beyond the scope and intent of the present paper, and must await another occasion.

## SITA DEWI FORSWORN:

### Principal Events in the Story as

### Depicted in Hikayat Seri Rama and a Wayang Kulit Siam Version.

| Hikayat Seri Rama<br>(R.van Eysinga/Shellabear) | Wayang Kulit Siam<br>(Hamzah Awang Amat) |
|---|---|
| 1. Rama is busy giving an audience. | 1. Seri Rama is unwell and has to go for a ritual bath at Taman Banjaran Sari. He leaves with Laksemana and his two attendants, Pak Dogol and Wak Long. |
| 2. Kikewi Dewi - wife of Maharaja Bibasenam and Seri Rama's sister to draw Rawana's portrait. She wishes to know what Rawana looked like. | 2. Mak Inang Kabelat, a Yakshini from Rawana's who has been living with Sita Dewi in the guise of an old maid servant (<u>dayang</u>) persuades her to draw Rawana's portrait. Her motive is to bring about the separation of Seri Rama and Siti Dewi. |
| 3. Sita Dewi draws the portrait on a fan which is given to Kikewi Dewi. Siti Dewi goes to sleep. | 3. The portrait is drawn upon a piece of paper after the <u>dayang</u> agrees to certain conditions. |
| | 4. While the portrait is being drawn Seri Rama, who is in the pond, suddenly feels a burning sensation over his whole body. He falls ill. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. | At Seri Rama's sudden approach Kikewi Dewi places the fan on Sita Dewi's breast. | 5. | At Seri Rama's unexpected return, the piece of paper on which the portrait is painted is hidden under a mattress on his couch. |
| | | 6. | Seri Rama becomes even more seriously ill when he lies down on the couch. He suspects that some object in the room is the cause of his illness. |
| 7. | Seri Rama sees the portrait on Sita Dewi's breast. Kikewi Dewi tells him that Sita Dewi caressed the fan fondly before going off to sleep. | 7. | A search is conducted. |
| | | 8. | Rama recovers his health once the portrait is found. |
| 9. | Sita Dewi is awakened and she admits having drawn Rawana's portrait. | 9. | Siti Dewi admits that she drew the portrait. |
| 10. | Rama accuses Sita Dewi of being unfaithful to him. She protests, claiming innocence. | 10. | Rama accuses Sita Dewi of being in love with Rawana, and she protests, claiming innocence. |
| | | 11. | Seri Rama severely beats up Siti Dewi. |
| 12. | Sita Dewi is ordered by Seri Rama to leave the palace forthwith. | 12. | Siti Dewi is sentenced to death., Laksemana is to be her executioner. |

13. Laksemana is ordered to bring back the liver of Siti Dewi. Rama says it will probably be like that of a dog.

14. Sita Dewi leaves after praying to Dewata Mulia Raya to strike dumb the slanderous woman and all animals in the land.

14. Siti Dewi leaves with Laksemana for the wilderness to be executed.

15. Once Siti Dewi is ready, Laksemana shoots three arrows at her. All three disappear and by turn after each arrow rice, flour and clothes descend before Siti Dewi.

16. Laksemana advises Siti Dewi to take refuge in Maharisikala's place of Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas. They part company.

17. Betara Guru sends down Dewa Indera with orders to turn himself into a black dog and to cross Laksemana's path.

18. Laksemana kills the black dog with an arrow, and cutting its carcass open, removes its liver.

19. Laksemana hands over the liver to Seri Rama, who realising that Siti Dewi has in fact been executed, nearly becomes insane.

20. Sita Dewi reaches Maharisikala's home with her retinue.

21. Maharisikala's advises her to remain at his home until such time as Seri Rama comes personally to fetch her. (Shallebear: The Maharisi advises her to reject any entreaty on Rama's part for her to return to him.)

22. Rama is told the truth regarding Siti Dewi not having been killed. He recovers,

23. An attempt is made through Sagariwa to bring Siti Dewi back but she is not willing to return to Seri Rama. Maharisikala refuses to get involved.

24. Pak Dogol suggests a scheme to recover Siti Dewi: news should be sent to her informing her that her husband is dead and that she should come to pay her last respects before he is buried. Seri Rama agrees to go along with the ruse.

25. Hanuman is sent to Siti Dewi to give her the news of Rama's 'death'.

26. Sita Dewi comes to see Seri Rama's "body" and when, suddenly awakening, he attempts to catch her, she flies off in the form of a white bird. Hanuman, similarly transformed, goes in pursuit. Assuming the shape of a fish, she descends into a lake at Wat Tujuh Kedi Bermas.

27. Hanuman again seeks Maharisikala's help, but the Maharisi still has no intention of getting involved.

At this stage comes the story of Lava and Kusha with the two versions showing considerable differences in details.

28. Sita Dewi's curse fulfilled. Seri Rama realises that in fact she has been innocent all the time.

29. Seri Rama meets his two sons, Kusi and Serawi. He uses them in another attempt to reconcile with Siti Dewi.

30. Seri Rama leaves with Laksemana for Durwati Purwa to bring Sita Dewi home. He meets his two sons and is reunited in marriage with Sita Dewi by Maharisikala. The royal family returns to Seri Rama's kingdom.

30. Siti Dewi agrees to Seri Rama, but imposes certain conditions. These will in fact make their reunion into another marriage. Seri Rama agrees and the wedding takes place. Seri Rama and his family then return to Siusia Mendarapura.

## 4. THE USE OF THE EPISODE IN A RITUAL WAYANG KULIT SIAM PERFORMANCE

While the episode of Sita Dewi's banishment may be played in ordinary performances it is rarely used in this manner. In berjamu performances, however, it gains special significance. Overall, ritual performances differ considerably in detail from ordinary entertainment oriented ones. Although the overall structure is retained, much additional activity takes place, principally to acknowledge the presence of the supernatural and its connection with the participants in the shadow play.

It has already been elsewhere indicated that Wayang Kulit Siam berjamu performances take place on one of several occasions including the graduation of a puppeteer or the salutation of his teachers (sembah guru), wind blandishment (semah angin), the fulfilment of a vow (niat) and so on. Such performances become mandatory periodically, depending upon the understanding arrived at between a puppeteer and his teacher or the latter's specific instructions. On such occasions the performances may not be ommited, for negligence in this matter could have dire consequences including spirit attack and illness.

The structure of ritual performances, no matter what their aim, is immensely more complex than that of a normal ones. Inevitably one of the requisite ingredients is the story of Sita Dewi's banishment and her reconciliation with Seri Rama (Sita Dewi Dihalau).

The principal activities of a ritual performance are the following:

1. The Statement of the Feast (*Ucapan Jamuan* or *Kenduri*)
2. The Musical Prelude
3. The Invitation to the Spirits (*Memadah*)
4. The *Dalang Muda* Episode
5. The *Wak Peran Hutan* Episode
6. The *Dalang Muda* Episode (continued)
7. The regular story performance
8. The *Bentara Kala* Episode
9. Preparations for *Berjamu*
10. Musical Interlude for the Trance Sessions (*Lupa*) and the Invitation (*Memadah*)
11. Getting the *Semangat* from *Betara Guru*
12. The Invitation (*Memadah*)
13. The Feasting (*Berjamu*)
14. The Sending Off (*Penghantar*)
15. The Release (*Pelepas*)
16. The Bathing or Washing Ceremony (*Bersiram*)

Of these, as far as the "Sita Dewi Forsworn" episode is concerned,
those commencing with the preparations for *berjamu* (No. 9) are
the most important. From this point on the puppeteer gets into
contact with the invisible beings to attend his invitation so
that they can come to the feast. That the *berjamu* is a
wedding feast becomes obvious from the offerings prepared.
Among the basic items required is the theatre consecration
(*buka panggung*) on the third and final night of performance is
a sum of $ 50.00 placed as a dowry, indicating that Seri Rama
is trying to win Sita Dewi back, having at last acceded to her
demand that her return to him must take the form of a second
wedding. Even the inverted pot of water (*air sunsang*) containing

a mixture of offerings suspended above the shadow play theatre (panggung) contains, amongst other objects, a ring -- another gift from Seri Rama to Sita Dewi. Cakes, cooked chicken, glutinous rice (nasi semangat), fruits and other articles, even make-up items, are part of the wedding gifts (hantaran) offered by the hero to Sita Dewi.

Thus while the berjamu performance of Wayang Kulit Siam serves several important spiritual functions already noted, a function of no less significance is the wedding of Seri Rama and Sita Dewi. To this wedding feast, a host of spirits and gods representing the various categories of the environment with which they are associated are invited by the dalang through the agency of the pair of comic characters Pak Dogol and Wak Long, the former a Manifestation of Betara Guru, as well as Hanuman. Through trance, in his form as one of these characters, the puppeteer travels to invite the invisible host, making sure that none is left out for spirits not invited can take offence and cause trouble at some later date.

An analysis of the structure of berjamu performances reveals that one of the final events, usually featured on the morning of the fourth day after a rigorous all-night performance, is to have the actual feasting in which various gods and spirits participate, following the invitational (memadah) trance sessions. The appearance of the invited guests marks the beginning of the actual eating. The spirits by turn, as they arrive, are informed of the nature of the occasion and literally consume the offerings. Alternatively, appropriate offerings usually food items, are placed at suitable points around the theatre and possibly further afield for the invisible guests

to consume at leisure.

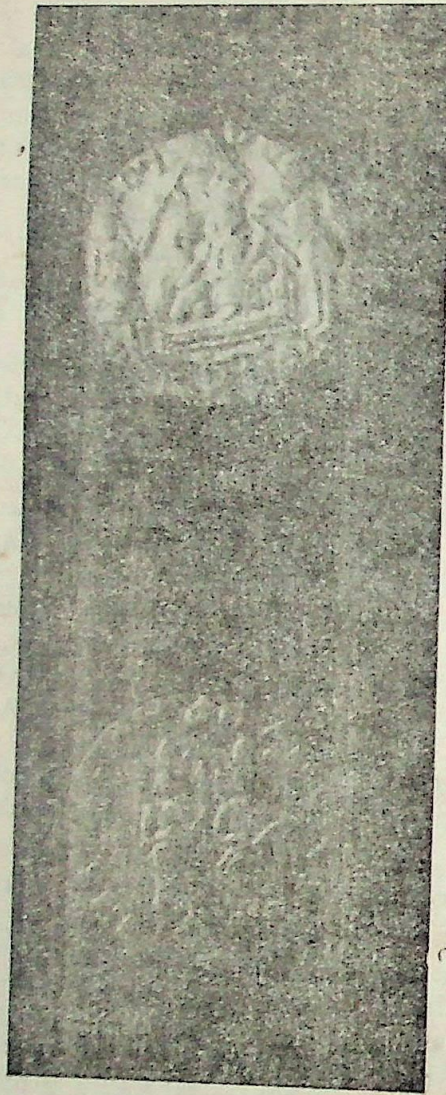
These events make the story of <u>Sita Dewi Dihalau</u> particularly significant. While the performance celebrates a joyous occasion, the entire performance is in itself an offering, no actual wedding ritual takes place in a performance but the <u>dalang</u>'s narrative and the play's dialouge make it abudantly clear that guests arriving at the very special wedding are being entertained. Along the way, other objectives too get fulfilled. These include spiritual and emotional release for the puppeteer and his companion performers as well as that of the human and supernatural audience, usually not deliberately sought in the case of such performances. The environment gets ritually cleansed; malicious influences (<u>bahadi</u>) or evil forces are driven away. The multifunctional character of a <u>berjamu</u>, however, should not detract from its pri[illegible] immediate objective -- the celebration of the second wedding of Seri Rama and Sita Dewi. Thus the core of the <u>berjamu</u> performance is the episode, <u>Sita Dewi Dihalau</u> (Sita Dewi Forsworn).

slanting parasol on the seated figures. Like Rāma he wears a three-pronged crown and ear-rings but unlike him, tight trousers and tunic-like coat, similar to that seen on the coins of the Kuṣāṇas. But for the crown and ear-ornaments he could well have been confused with a royal attendent. On the right stands a figure with three-pronged crwwn, folded hands and upraised tail. One may be tempted to identify him with Hanumān, but the long prognathism would decide it in favour of Jāmbavat. Below the throne is the legend in Gurmukhi letters '*Ra*(*ā*)*ma Sata*)' (Truth is Rama). Else. where at the border, at 8, 11 and 1 O'clock, are diminutive Gurmukhi letters that form the word *na*(*ā*)*ma*, at the respective places.

It would be interesting to compare and contrast the present Taṅkā with the one published by Devendra Handa, from Babhut Mal Dugar's Collection (Sardarshahar-Rajasthan), in JNSI, vol. XXXIII (p. 135-136). Apparently similar, the two pieces reveal substantial divergences.

The legend forms the most prominent differences on the obverse. While Dugar's Taṅkā has, in Gurmukhi characters, *Sati Rāma*, repeated five times; on my Tanka *Rāma nāma*, repeated equal times, replaces the aforesaid legend. As described by Handa, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa support bows with their right hands near the chest, in the case of my Taṅkā they hold tipped arrows in vertical position in their left hands, the bows being slung on their right shoulders. As against Dugar's piece, the present Taṅkā shows them moving to right which may represent their journey to the forest. There is not a shred of doubt about their standing posture on the Sardarshahar Taṅkā.

The reverse reveals still more glaring differences. The position of the divine couple, Rāma and Sitā, is reversed on my Tanka. While here they, seated on the throne, face right; on Dugar's piece, they are facing left. The rod of authority in Rāma's hand is conspicuous by its absence on the latter. Their seating postures also vary in some measure. Laksmana's dress and function are identical on the two. However, unlike my Taṅkā there is no figure on the right, on Dugar's piece. On the other hand, it has Hanumān, seated reverently, below the throne. My piece curiously does not depict Māruti, otherwise the eternal companion of Rāma. The legend on Dugar's Taṅkā, as read by Handa, is uniform : *Rāma nāma*, repeated thrice. The piece under study has *Sīta nāma*, below the throne and na(ā) ma, repeated thrice, elsewhere.

From the Gurmukhi script used for the legend, it would be reasonable to conclude that such Taṅkās were manufactured in Punjab to enable its people to offer them at religious places, on different occasions.

References

1. The metal may be silver-washed/coated copper/bronze, as the patches on its surface indicate.
2. The photograph published with Handa's note also shows the objects in their hands to be arrows rather than bows.

# A NEW RĀMA-TAṄKĀ FROM AMBALA

*By*

**Satyavrat**

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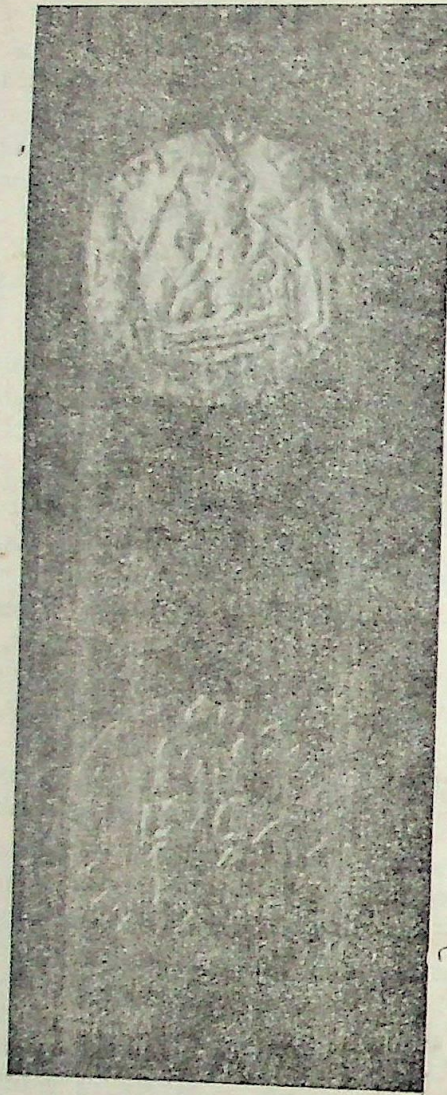
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# A NEW RĀMA-TAṄKĀ FROM AMBALA

SATYAVRAT

Recently I acquired from my nephew, Swaraj Chand, a bullion-dealer at Ambala, a Rāma-Taṅkā alongwith some notable coins. In view of certain new features, the Taṅkā merits attention. It is being published here in the hope that it would inrerest both the connoisseurs and coin-collectors.

Metal : base silver[1]; Shape : round; Weight : 10.9260 gms.; Diameter : 2.1 cm.; Thickness : 0.3 cm. (not uniform).

*Obverse* :

Rāma and Lakṣmṇa are wearing three-pronged crowns, pendent ear-ornaments and dhotis with slightly curved horizontal fold, between their respective legs. From the position of the crowns and ear-ornaments they seem to be facing front, but their uplifted right feet, as indicated by a bend at the knees, more prominent in Rāma's case, would indicate that they are moving to right. They hold pointed arrows in their left hands, somewhat lifted, almost parallel to the shoulders. Both support bows on their right shoulders, the representation of Lakṣmaṇa's bow being more perceptible. They seem to be clasping, with their right hand, their respective bows, hanging from the right shoulders. The scene may well be reminiscent of Rama's departure to the forest, consequent on the exile inflicted upon him by his father. All around is the legend in Gurmukhi script '*Ra*(*ā*)*ma na*(*ā*)*ma*, repeated five times, though some faint letters are also traceable under the feet of the two figures.

*Reverse* :

Rāma and Sitā are seated on a throne, facing right though here too Rāma's three-pronged crown and ear-rings (kuṇḍalas) suggest that Rāma faces front, the position of his left hand in which he holds the sceptre, and folded legs with the inverted left foot issuing from under the hips, notwithstanding. His right hand is akimbo. While, as is evident from its folds on the knees and hips, Rāma wears a *dhoti*; Sitā, seated closely behind Rāma, with folded hands, is wearing the traditional female dress. Her head is covered with the fringe of her *sāri*. Lakṣmaṇa stands to the left of the throne, holding

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# RECREATIONS OF THE RAMAYANA IN TAMIL AND HINDI

by S. Shankar Raju Naidu

"Probably no work of world literature, secular in its origin" states A.A. Macdonell in the 'Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics', "has ever produced so profound an influence on the life and thought of a people as the Ramayana". In the world of Epics, Ramayana occupies an outstanding position because great men of letters since the pre-Christian era have lavished upon this story their peculiar poetic genius and have felt free to adapt its theme and content to their own cultural patterns and modes of creation. It is surprising to observe that no other epic in the world literature including Homer's Iliad and Oddessy of the 7th century B.C., virgil's Pu ic War, the German Alliterative unrhymed rhythmic epic 'Beowulf', Alonso's Spanish Epic 'Arancana', Milton's Paradise Lost and its sequal 'Paradise Regained', and several other such works, has ever had a later version deviating from the original one in the same or a different language. The pride of

place goes only to the Ramayana which has reincaranated in practically all the languages of India in both the classical and folk forms, running parallel to the indigenous cultural patterns of the people among whom the authors lived and breathed.

Adi Kavi Valmiki gave us that reservoir, the Adikavya Ramayana, which has helped the great poets and philosophers of the different parts of India and the South East Asia to infuse into it their own superb aspirations and fertile imaginations. Though there should have been several forms of this story earlier than Valmiki, it was this great poet-cum-philosopher who gave to this epic a well knit plot with all the great requisites of a classic. India being truly innovative in the fields of religion, philosophy and literature too, the later authors boldly took great liberties with the architectonics of the Ramayana. Thus we see several great works on Ramayana itself in various forms in all the developed, developing and

undeveloped languages of India and abroad. We can clearly observe that it is only the Ramayana that has uniformly attracted the attention of all the people of India, the literate and illiterate, the rich and the poor. The magical achievement of the Ramayana has been to link the head and the heart of the Indians right from time immemorial.

It is a well-known fact that Valmiki Ramáyana is the earliest available Indian Epic in Sanskrit which had its creation before the 3rd century B.C. at the latest. Since then recreations of the Ramayana have been effected in large and small forms in the classical and folk styles in all the languages of India. A close study of all the later works would convince us that the most outstanding are the recreations in Tamil and Hindi, viz. Kambaramayanam of Tamil and Ramcharit Manas of Avadhi Hindi. While assessing the place of the Tamil Kambaramayanam in world literature, V.V.S. Iyer who was a great scholar

in Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, English, French and Tamil catagorically states, "In the Ramayanam of Kamban, the world possesses and epic which can challenge comparison not merely with the Iliad and the Aeneid, the Paradise Lost and the Mahabharata but with its original itself, namely, the Ramayana of Valmiki.xxxxx It is an opinion that has grown slowly with years and after deep and careful study."[1]

V.S. Smith considers Tulasidas, the author of Ramcharit Manas, to be "the greatest man of his age in India". Dr. Ram Awadh Dwivedi in his learned work 'Hindi literature' has acclaimed it in the following words -- "It is often said that no decent English house-hold is without a copy of Shakespeare's work and the Bible. But Ramcharit Manas of Tulasidas, for the teeming millions of North India, takes the place of Bible and Shakespeare combined."[2]

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1. V.V.S. Iyer, 'Kamba Ramayanam - A Study', p.1.
2. Dr. Ram Avadh Dwivedi, 'Hindi Literature', p.49.

Though Ramayana has been sung in the earliest of Sangam Tamil literature dating back to pre-Christian era in Ettuttohai (Collection of Eight Monumental works), Pattuppattu (Ten Idylls) and Patinenkil-Kanakku (Eighteen Minor Moral works), it has been reverentially referred to in the Aimperumkapiyangal, the Five great Epics, particularly Silappadiharam of about the 2nd century A.D. The author Ilangovadihal, the younger brother of a Chera king, glorifies Rama in his monumental epic by saying, "What ear is that ear which has not heard the story of Ramayana wherein Vishnu as Rama, with his younger brother went to the forest, his tender feet reddening - the feet which had as Trivikrama's, measured the three worlds in but two steps, placing the third on the head of King Mahabali - the feet that crossed the ocean and killed Ravana and his tribe and destroyed the whole of Lanka?" Later the Alwars (Vaishnava Saints) and Nayanmars (Shaiva Saints) also profusely sang the glory of Rama

and Sita. It was in this context and against this background that Kambar appeared on the scene and recreated the Ramayana in an Epic Form, a like of which we do not find either before him or after. In fact, as Justice S. Maharajan says in his English Kamban, "His (Kamban's) great poetry keeps its hold firmly on the centuries, because he gives poetic articulation to those timeless problems which arise at all times and the answers to which will continue to fascinate the spirit of the Man till the end of Time"[1]. Various story-poems and lyrics in both classical and Folk styles are available in Tamil in an abundant measure, but without any fear of contradiction it may be stated that Kamba Ramayanam stands supreme.

In Hindi literature, we may go back as far as 'Paumachariyu' of the 9th century written by Svayambhu Deva in Apabhramsha. Poet Bhupati of 1285 A.D. is supposed to be the author of the work 'Ram Charit Ramayana' but it is not now available. One Bhagwatdas

1. Justice S. Maharajan, 'Kamban', p.1.

is said to have offered 'Bheda Bhaskar Ramayan' during the 14th cent. with a pure philosophical content. Then came Surdas, the Milton of Hindi literature, who has given us 'Sur-Ramayana' in Braj Bhasha during the early sixteenth century A.D. Tulasidas the author of Ramcharit Manas appeared with his contemporaries Nabhadas, Keshavdas, Senapati and others. Several works in both classical and Folk Forms appeared in the languages of the Hindi area before and after Tulasidas, but his Ramcharit Manas is undoubtedly the most outstanding literary work of Religious Art in the entire gamut of Hindi Ramayana literature. Mention must be made of Ramachandrika of Keshavdas, Kavitha Ratnakar of Senapati in Braj Bhasha and Saket of our Rashtra kavi Maithilisaran Gupta in Modern Hindi. However 'Arun Ramayan' of poet Arun Ramavatar is the only Ramayana in Hindi in its real Khadiboli Form which deserves special mention.

Thus we see that the Magnum Opus in the area of Ramayana literature in Tamil is Kamba Ramayanam, and in Hindi, the Ramcharit manas whose Five Hundredth Anniversary we are celebrating at an international level. It is a well known fact that Valmiki Ramayana is the main source for both the above works of eminence. But it is surprising to observe that there are several identical deviations from the original in both the recreations. Among such deviations, the picturisation of the Pre-Matrimonial love of Rama and Sita which is not found in Valmiki Ramayana, is the most sublime.

In Kamban the incident occurs where, at the very arrival of Rama and Lakshmana with Vishvamitra to Mithila, Rama happens to see by chance Sita standing in the chamber of her palace. The poet sings -

"Eye caught Eye, in pairs,
And each the other devoured;
Unhinged, utterly exhausted
The Prince stood looking at the Princess [1]
And the Princess stood looking at the Prince."

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1. Justice S. Maharajan, 'Kavi Chakravarti Kamban', p.629 (Kamba Ramayanam 1-10-35)

Explaining it still further, Kamban muses-

"The pair of pointed lances called her glance

Sank deep in shoulders broad of handsome Ram:

The lotus eyes of him with sounding anklets

in turn empierced the bosom of the maid -

Bewitching like enchantress fair of yore".[1]

The poet explains the culmination and reaches the height of exquisite imagination when he says -

"The in-drinking look of each
Formed the love-rope,
Which clasped and bound the other;
The heart did the pulling,
And the Lord with the lovely Bow
And the Maid with the lancet look
Changed places,
Entering each other's bosom."[2]

The next scene of inevitable separation is brought forth thus -

"That she could not the hand-some one embrace,

The bangled maiden like a statue stood;

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1. V.V.S. Iyer, 'Kamba Ramayanam - A Study', (1-10-36)

2. Justice S. Maharajan, 'Kavi Chakravarti Kamban', p.629 (1-10-37).

Her heart and will and beauty trailing him,
The youth with sage dissolved from sight".[1]

Kamban offers an extraordinary justification for this love at first sight -

"What need for any words when they
Who parted from their bed on ocean dark
united again?"[2]

and draws the attention of the readers towards Rama and Sita being incarnations of Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi respectively, thereby infusing the essence of deification, par excellance.

In Tulasi, we find the same picture but with a different background. After their arrival at Mithila, Rama with Lakshmana goes into the royal garden to collect flowers for morning prayers. At that time, Poet Tulasi says, Rama hears -

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1. V.V.S. Iyer, 'Kamba Ramayanam - A Study', (1-10-39).
2. Ibid., (1-10-38).

"The tinkle of her bracelets and anklets and the bells on her girdle and says to Lakshmana that it sounds as though Kamadeva were beating his drum, ambitious to vanquish the world. So saying he turns and looks in that direction and his eyes are fixed on Sita's face as the patridge gazes on the moon. Motionless stays his beauteous eyes, as though King Nimi (a great grandfather of Solar Race who looked at his people as his own eyes and got the boon of ever remaining in the eye-lids of all human beings) has deserted his eye-lids in modest confusion"[1].

The pure sentiment of love thus sprouted in the hearts of both. Now the Poet Tulasidas muses in ecstacy -

"Her eyes grew tired with gazing on Raghupati's beauty; even her eyelids ceased to move; she was faint with excess of love like the patridge when she looks on the autumn moon. She drew

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1. W.D.P. Hill, 'The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama', (Ramcharit Manas 1-265-1, 2).

Rama into her heart by the pathway of her eyes and carefully closed on him the door of her eyelids"[1].

Here again, the justification offered by Tulasidas is just the same as that of Kamban when he says -

"None knew that the love (of Rama and Sita) had been theirs of old"[2],

thereby suggesting that Rama and Sita were incarnations. Thus deification here has reached its zenith.

We can show several such parallels. Another captivating picture is in the scene of the abduction of Sita by Ravana. Kamban and Tulasi want to prevent Sita from being physically touched by Ravana as has been portrayed in Valmiki Ramayana, and consequently

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1. W.D.P. Hill, 'The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama', (Ramcharit Manas 1-265-4)

2. Ibid., (1-262-4). See also 'Kambar Aur Tulasi', Dr. S. Shankar Raju Naidu, University of Madras, Madras-5.

Kambar tells that Ravana 'uproots the very hut with Sita in it, upto one mile radius with his pillar-like arms, puts it in his plane and flies off through the air'.[1] Tulasi adopts, however, a different method. He introduces the element of Maya Sita. Just before the arrival of Mareecha in the guise of the golden deer, Rama tells Sita with a smile -

"I am about to play an engaging game as man; do you then make your abode in fire till I have extirpated the demons".[2]

Sita follows it implicitly by entering into the fire. The poet says -

"She left her image there of just the same form and modest disposition as her own. Not even Lakshmana knows the secret of what the Blessed Lord has done".[3]

It may be mentioned here that the real Sita remanifested only after the death of Ravana during Fire-ordeal.

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1. Kamba Ramayanam (3-8-74)
2. Ramcharit Manas (3-30-1)
3. Ibid., (3-30-2,3).

It is clear that the objectives of Kamban of Tamil and Tulasi of Hindi were more or less similar in so far as they effected departures from the version of Valmiki[1].

Thus it is evident that the pattern of evolution of the story of the Ramayana in multifarious forms exhibits beyond doubt the unity that underlies the different linguistic and cultural areas of India.

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1. For detailed study, see 'A Comparative Study of Kamba Ramayanam and Tulasi Ramayan', Dr. S. Shankar Raju Naidu, University of Madras, Madras-5.

# दुनिया भर में राम नाम के शहर

## हममें, तुममें, खड्ग-खम्भ में घट घट व्यापे राम।

ग्लोब (भूमण्डल) शुन्य में अवतरित होता है और अपना आकार बढ़ाता तीव्र वेग से घुमता हुआ पुरे परिदृश्य पर उभरता है। भारत का मानचित्र स्पष्ट होते ही तिरंगा लहराता है, फिर एक-एक करके दुनिया भर के झण्डे पुरे भूमण्डल पर लहराते हुए छा जाते हैं। पुरा परिदृश्य ही समूची पृथ्वी और विश्व के झण्डो को पूरक बनकर एक-दुसरे में विलीन हो जाता हैं। यही से स्पष्ट होता है कि सारी वसुधा हमारा परिवार है।

अकाट्य सत्य यह भी है कि प्रकृति में परिवर्तन हुआ, वर्षा ऋतु की विदाई और शरत ऋतु का आगमन हुआ कि नवरात्रि यानी महादुर्गा की शक्तियां वातावरण में उभरकर सामने आ गई। ऐसे ही दीपावली हुई नहीं कि पुरा वातावरण ही दीप-ज्योति, कवच से सज जाता है। यानी, समुचे राष्ट्र की चेतना भी उसी गुण से मिलकर प्रतिबिम्बित होने लगती है जिसे अनुभव किया जा सकता है तो आनन्द रूप में ग्राह्य भी किया जाता है। 'समिति-समानी' सामूहिक चेतना में प्रतिनिधित्व करता है, जो सारी सृष्टि की समानता और गुण को भी सामने रखती है। ऐसे ही भारतीय संसद के हर सदस्य सामूहिक चेतना के प्रतिनिधि होते हैं और वास्तविक रुप में राष्ट्र के प्रशासक होते हैं तभी तो सरकार राष्ट्र का आईना होती है। जो गुण सामूहिक चेतना का होगा वही गुण सरकार में परिलक्षित होंगे। दशहरा और दीपावली का संदर्भ पूरी तरह से श्री राम की सत्ता से जुड़ा हुआ है। रावण का वध, विजय दशमी, अयोध्या आगमन की खुशियां और राज्याभिषेक बैज्ञानिको और बिद्वानों ने इसको एकदम अलग दृष्टि से व्यक्त किया। सारी दुनिया का ऐसा कौन सा कोना नहीं है, जहां राम नाम के शब्द उच्चारण से जुड़े शहर न हों। जाने-माने बैज्ञानिक प्रों. टोनी अबु नादर ने एक चैनल पर विभिन्न देशों के लगभग एक हजार शहरों के नाम गिनवा कर और मानचित्र पर उन्हें दर्शाते हुए उसकी पुष्टि की जो कि राम नाम से जुड़े हुए हैं। राम नाम की लुट है... दुनिया भर में लूट, कुछ कहिए, विचारिए, जानिए परन्तु, प्रमाण सामने है- यही गान आज बैज्ञानिकों की खोजबीन का अभिन्न हिस्सा बनकर उभरकर सामने भी आ गया है।

राम नाम से जुड़े शहर दुनिया भर में हैं। अरब, ईरान, इराक, जॉडेन, इजराइल, न्यूयॉर्क, जर्मनी, फ्रांस, हांगकांग, अमेरिका, पेरु, स्पेन,सीडन, सीरिया, स्विट्जरलैंड, तुर्की आदि सभी राष्ट्रों में राम नाम के शहर अवश्य हैं। भारत में ही राम नाम के 71 शहर हैं, जिसमे रामनगर 8 हैं, तो रामपुर 20 हैं। कश्मीर में रामवन है, तो रामनगर भी है। ईरान में रामिया, रामरोप, रामिस्क, रामसार, रामहमोज, आदि शहर हैं, तो इराक में रामादी-बरेज, रामादी- तलघ, रामजान हैं। इजराइल में हर रामोन, मिजाप- रामोन, रामा हैं। उधर, जॉर्डन की ओर बढ़े तो राम और 'रामा', रामाल्लाह रामलाह, रामथा आदि शहर मिलते हैं। केन्या में राम, रामू नामक शहर हैं तो लेबनान में 'रामिची' है और लीबिया में 'रामलहल कबीरा' 'रामलटल विघ' है तो कनाड़ा में 'रामसे' और 'अंजोमा रामरिटिना' मेडागास्कर में हैं मेक्सिको में चार शहर राम नाम के हैं जिनमें रामरेज, रामोनल और दा रामोस हैं। न्यूयाँर्क में ही रामपो और रामापोखिर हैं अफगानिस्तान में रामगुल नाम के दो शहर बताए गए हैं तो अलास्का में रामार्ट है, अर्जेंटीना में रामल्लो, रामब्लोनस, रामोन, रामाज दोनों ही नाम के शहर हैं, तो आस्ट्रिया में रामगस्टीन और रामोकाम्ट हैं। बांग्लादेश में रामगढ़, रामपुर-बौलिया और रामा नाम के शहर हैं बेल्जियम में 4 राम नाम के शहर हैं इनमें रामसडोक, रामसेल, रामस्केपेल तो बोलिविया में सैन रामान नाम के तीन शहर हैं और बोत्सवाना में रामोत्सवा, रामस्डन है ब्राजील में रामल्हो और रामोज नाम के शहरो का विवरण मिलता है। कनाडा में राम 'रामा' रामपार्ट के बारे में बताया गया हैं। डेनमार्क में तो रामे, रामसिंह, रामट्रेन नाम के शहर की बात सामने रखी गई हैं। इंग्लैंड में पहुंचें तो वहा 6 शहर राम नाम के हैं। उनमें राम्पसाइड, रामसबाटम, रामसे, राम्सगेट, रामसगिल आदि हैं। यही नहीं फ्रांस में भी राम नाम के शहर हैं। रामटुएल, रामबर वियलर्स, सेंट रामबट उनमें प्रमुख हैं जबकि जर्मनी में 4 राम नाम वाले शहर हैं- जैसे रामबिन, रामबो, रामस्टें, रामसडार्फ। फिलीपीन्स में रामोज हैं, रावांडा में रामबुरा हैं औरे दक्षीण अफ्रीका में 'रामटलबामा' 'रामे' और रामसगेट हैं तो सउदी अरब में रामलटघाम, रामलटल घफा। अगर स्पेन में पहुंचें तो वहां रामसबर्ग, रामनाज नामक शहर हैं। रुस में 9 शहर हैं। उनमे रामेका, रामित, रामोन, रामश्की, रामेश्कोप औदि प्रमुख हैं। यहां तक कि युनाइटेड अरब अमीरात में भी 'रामस' नाम का शहर हैं। प्रो. टोनी नादर दुनियाभर में शिव, मनु, 'अम्बा' और गंगा नाम के शहर की खोजबीन में भी जुटे हैं। देखना यह है कि शहरों के नामो की महत्ता आने वाले वक्त में क्या सिद्ध करती है।

सारे जहां से अच्छा हिन्दोस्तों हमारा... जैसी भावपुर्ण रचना के मूर्घन्य मुंसिफ डॉ. अल्लामा इकबाल ने भी भगवान राम की स्तुति की है। उन्होंने भी प्रभु राम की महिमा के कशीदे गढ़े हैं एक बानगी -

*लबरेज है शराब - ए -*
*हकीकत से जाम-ए-हिन्द,*
*सब फल्सफी हैं खित्ता-ए-*
*मगरिब के राम-ए-हिन्द।*

*ये हिन्दियों के फिक्र-ए-*
*फलक-रस का है असर,*
*रिफत में आसमान से भी*
*ऊंचा है बाम-ए-हिन्द।*

*इस देश में हुए हैं*
*हजारों मलिक सरिश्त,*
*मशहुर जिनके दम से है*
*दुनिया में नाम-ए-हिन्द।*

*है राम के बजूद पे*
*हिन्दुस्तान को नाज,*
*अहल-ए-नजर समझते हैं*
*उसको इमाम-ए- हिन्द।*

*एजाज इस चिराग-ए-*
*हिदायत का है यही,*
*रोशन तर अज सहर है*
*जमाने में शाम-ए-हिन्द।*

*तलवार का धनी था,*
*शुजाअत में फर्द था,*
*पाकीजगी में, जोश-ए-*
*मुहब्बत में फर्द था।*

साभार रेनू गुप्ता (इटरनल सॅल्यूशंस)

**सौजन्यः- डा० बिट्ठल दास मुँधड़ा अध्यक्षः भारतीय विद्या मंन्दिर, कोलकाता**

**Ramayana: Feuds in Family-life**

The verses of Ramayana form the foundations of Indian literature. The genius of Maharshi Valmiki, who has authored this piece, is magnanimous. What makes him unique is his fineness and grandeur which is yet simplistic. Though his characters seem to appear as 'god-like', sacred and profound, they actually portray the ordinary life of the everyday. This makes it effective and contemporary for all times.

Various facets of Ramayana have been debated so far and here I intend to look into the feuds in family life as depicted in Ramayana. The following account records my observations in Ramayana with regard to the above stated topic.

It is quite evident that all the great epics across the globe are tales of conflict. Be it Homer's *Iliad and Odyssey*, Milton's *'Paradise Lost'* or Dante's *'Divine Comedy'*. Overtly they may appear to be narratives of rivalry between emperors and empires; but at their crux they contain a plethora of feuds within the families.

Helen's elopement with the Prince of Troy, Paris, makes one suspect her conformity to the institution of family life. Thus conflict becomes pivotal in here.

In Ramayana the following families assume relative significance and prominence:

- The family of Dasharatha
- The family of Vali and Sugreeva
- The family of Gouthama and Ahalya
- The family of Ravana
- The family of Rama and Seetha and
- Ordinary Families

Let us now analyze these families in some detail:

**The family of Dasharatha:** The renowned ruler of Ikswaku clan, Dasharatha, had three wives, Kousalya, Sumitra and Kaike. Apart from these three he also had 350 other wives.

After performing *'Putrakamesti Yaga'* (a ritual for progeny), Dasharatha distributes the *Payasa* (a sweet dish) among his three wives. The eldest queen, Kousalya's power and position, the younger Kaike's enticing beauty and the pitiable neutrality of Sumitra, all had influenced the aged Dasharatha. Therefore he distributed the *Payasa* among all the three. However he anticipating trouble, gives off the remaining portion to Sumitra the second time. This act cleverly captures the atmosphere of the palace. It reflects the efforts of Dasharatha to maintain equilibrium within the private space.
Though very subtle, here we see the dark clouds hanging in without making their presence felt.
Further, as one can see there is a certain kind of bondage between Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shatrugna and they are all loved equally. There is a conscious effort to maintain the harmony of the family by every member within. However this gets disrupted when once Rama is about to ascend the throne. Contrasting emotions sensitively find expression. Ambiguities and ambivalence prevail.

Rama's act of seeking blessings from Kousalya and Sumitra but not from Kaike prior to his accession to throne can be questioned. The debate may seem trivial however it is still amazing to know as to why Kaike was largely kept in dark until the very last minute? A justification is provided when Bharatha starts off from his maternal uncle's place after a bad dream, assuming that his father might have encountered some trouble because of his extremely egoist and proud mother. Anticipating such resistance from Kaike, may be she was shielded from the whole thing, we may assume.

Rama's dialogue with Bharatha at Chitrakoota Mountains, wherein he consoles Bharatha by saying that it is his right to ascend the throne as it was on that condition that the hand of Kaike was given to Dasharatha (Ayodhya Kanda) makes us understand Dasharatha's intentions of breaking that vow. Fearing any sort of resistance from Kaike he hastily arranges the whole event.
After being informed by Manthare about the ceremony Kaike initially is also delighted about the development, however later when Manthare taunts her and Bharatha as being pushed to the status of slaves of Rama and Kousalya she becomes venomous. Later, as instructed by Manthare, she rebukes Dasharatha's plans and reminds him of the boons that he had granted her and urges him to send Rama to the forests and crown Bharatha. This is one major incident of conflict in Dasharatha'a family. A careful observation would enable us to also see the superfluous ness of Manthare's role. She is actually a manifestation of the deep desires of Kaike who is otherwise bound by the 'pseudo moralities of civilizations'.
The character of Kaike therefore appears to be more natural while in conflict with Dasharatha than while displaying farcical delight initially.

After being informed about the *'Vanavaasa'* of Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana, Kousalya laments her fate and complains about her life which neither got the love and attention from her husband nor will be getting the care and affection of her son. She moans in grief and snubs her position as worse than that of the maids of Kaike. Sumitra accepts the situation practically. We may assume that they ultimately surrender to silence helplessly witnessing the turns and twists. By not venting out their rebuttal in public both Kousalya and Sumitra confirm to the family life and its obligations, simultaneously it shows the conformist Valmiki.
Their silence and grief contain seeds of family disintegration in them; however they consciously cover this under the façade of innocent fatalism. Valmiki thus makes them embodiments of patience and perseverance who strive hard to protect the system of family life.
After the departure of Rama, Kousalya speaks ill about Kaike in front of Dasharatha. She fails to overcome her human tendencies. Similarly Lakshmana too criticizes Kaike and Dasharatha in harsh words and sees both as equally guilty. Manthare adds to this turmoil and intensifies the friction. But the serenity of the characters of Rama and Seetha withstands all this. By abiding to the words of his father Rama ensures the unity of the family. Through him Valmiki symbolizes the virtues of unity, cooperation and co existence.
Whereas the same Rama is seen wailing in the forests when Viradha abducts Seetha. Desperate Rama over here is more 'human' than divine. When he says "Kaike's

forethought is now fulfilled" he suggests to us the stale relationship that they shared. The truth preserved in the depths of his psyche gets expressed in his grief.

Kaike remains unmoved even when the entire Ayodhya curses her as responsible for the death of Dasharatha. Bharatha too gets a cold response when he enquires her about his father, she bluntly says "jabbering the name of Rama he went to a place where everyone ought to go".

From the above instances we can understand the under current of friction as deeply present in the fabric of family of Dasharatha. The outcome of such strife is quite usual. Fueled by Manthare, Kaike's annoyance outbursts in front of Dasharatha, Rama leaves to forest along with Seetha and Lakshmana, Dasharatha dies, Kousalya, Sumitra, Urmila, Bharatha and the entire Ayodhya has to go through this ordeal. This provides to us an instance where an entire family suffers due to its inner conflicts. As it is not any ordinary family but one which rules a state, it impacts the whole state. Valmiki through this work exemplifies the importance of harmony and balance in a family as essential to the smooth functioning of the state.

**The family of Vali and Sugreeva:** A Dravidian tribal family. Dumdubi, a *Rakshasa* is their fiercest foe. Vali chases Dumdubi out when he invades their province. Dumdubi running for his life takes refuge in a cave. Vali instructs his brother Sugreeva to wait until he returns and enters the cave. Thus a year passes. Listening to all the shouts and screams Sugreeva comes to the conclusion that Vali is dead. In order to prevent Dumdubi from posing further threat to the state, he covers the mouth of the cave with a boulder and returns home. After his return he ascends the throne. Sugreeva's assumption goes wrong as Vali returns and ousts Sugreeva as a traitor and abducts his wife. Sugreeva fights back with the help of Rama and gets all his lost possessions restored. Tare, the wife of Vali also becomes a part of Sugreeva's palace. Rama justifies his act of killing Vali by pointing out to his acts like ousting Sugreeva from the state and abducting his wife. Anyhow the cause of conflict in this family is the desire for power and women. These make the two suspect and fight each other. Hanumantha chides Angada later on when he suspects Sugreeva. More than the arrival of Rama and his benevolence to Sugreeva, Valmiki emphasizes over here the destruction of a family largely because of the inner conflicts. He also adds the detail about Vali's wife and Angada being given shelter in the kingdom of Sugreeva and provides a humane touch to his piece.

**The family of Gouthama and Ahalya:** Rama and Lakshmana successfully protect the *'yaga'* of sage Vishwamithra. On their way back to *Mithila*, sage Vishwamithra shows them the hermitage of Sage Gouthama. He takes them to Ahalya who was cursed to be a stone by her husband.

Gouthama was an austere sage who was always involved in rites and rituals. Despite having a child, Ahalya still aspired for some intimacy and companionship in life. This wife of the great sage was curious and attracted to Lord Indra. Indra takes advantage of this and gets intimate with Ahalya. Gouthama who sees them together curses both and moves to *Kailasa parvatha* giving his child to an inmate of the hermitage. The conflict over here arises because of the unfaithfulness of the wife.

However Ahalya regrets her sin and patiently waits for her liberation which comes to her in the form of Rama. In the meantime Gouthama also returns there realizing his fault, of

having ignored his wife, as the cause of all mishap. They reunite. Valmiki thus presents virtues of mercy and patience in life and conveys how essential it is to overcome momentary exasperations in life. He celebrates the conscience of the human beings in this episode. By narrating this tale of reunion of Gouthama and Ahalya in the presence of Rama, Valmiki places the quality of 'pardon' as a key tool in family life.

**The family of Ravana:** The family of Ravana, which includes his children, wife Mandodari, sister Shoorpanaki, brothers Kara-Dhusana, Kumbakarna and Vibhishana , was one that was full of love and affection. The brothers' love towards their sister is evident when they rush to *Dandakaranya* to help their troubled sister. The abduction of Seetha becomes the reason for disruption in this family.
Ravana's ears remain deaf to all the advices from Vibhishana. Vibhishana attempts to stop Ravana from hurting Hanumantha, by saying that it is not fair to kill a messenger and he urges him to return Seetha back to Rama. He brings elders to advice Ravana. But all his attempts go in vain as Ravana refuses to heed to his advices. On the other hand Kumbakarna and Indrajithu blame him. When Ravana refuses to listen to Vibhishana and rectify himself, he invariably joins the camp of Rama and Lakshmana. Vibhishana's wife too takes his side and supports Rama. Depressed Mandodari too asks Ravana to correct himself. He distances himself from all those who advice him against his action. Vibhishana defends himself from all accusations and says that his support for Rama is in the interest of the larger good of their clan. Ravana's family shows how a single crack in the wall can damage an entire family.

**The family of Rama and Seetha:** Seetha adamantly accompanies Rama to the forest. She rebukes Rama when he refuses to take her along and scorns at him by saying that it is not the quality of a 'man'. She prefers to commit suicide if she cannot accompany him. She persuades Rama to succumb to her demands. This actually shows her immense love towards Rama.
She again makes Rama go in search of Maricha guised as the 'Golden deer' in the forest. Maricha wounded by Rama cries for help in the tone of Rama. Lashmana aware of the trickery remains calm. Again Seetha over here criticizes Lakshmana in harsh words and calls him a foe in the guise of a friend who is hesistating to help Rama because of his ulterior motives about Seetha. She calls him a spy sent by Bharatha and threatens to commit suicide if he does not rush at once to aid Rama. Lakshmana fails to withstand these words and moves in the direction from where he heard the voice. The story moves on and Ravana abducts Seetha in the mean time.
Anyhow, Seetha is one character who does not hesitate to even quarrel in order to get her wants fulfilled. When we observe her character while making serious claims against Lakshmana, we get to know her true feeling about him. Or should we say that Seetha just acted like a normal human being in a tense situation?
But Seetha pays a heavy price for all her deeds. Irrespective of the cause, the damaging consequences that follow any act of haste and irrationality is what is being presented by Valmiki here.
Rama crowning Vibhishana after the war sends Hanumantha to bring Seetha. Seetha finds neither love nor affection in Rama's message. Rama's initial joy after seeing Seetha fades soon as he enraged by the fact that she stayed with Ravana all these time. Therefore

he proclaims that he has reached his goal and has established his might and bravery. He says that he waged a war on Ravana not for Seetha but in order to demonstrate his power and courage. He shuns Seetha and deserts her. Horrified by these words Seetha calls Rama's disgust as uncivilized and pleads him to trust her in vain. All these events take place in public and finally Seetha passes the 'Trial by fire' and emerges out without any stain. Rama then becomes gentle and tells Seetha that he had complete faith in her but he did this for the sake of the society.

In '*Uttara Ramayana*' Rama,leading a peaceful life as the emperor of Ayodhya with his family, becomes desirous of knowing the opinion of his subjects. Listening to their gossips he sends Seetha, who is a pregnant, to forest stating some lame reason. Though overtly Rama does this for the sake of his subjects, one may also see this as a manifestation of suspicion in Rama about Seetha. Valmiki characterizes the inability in Rama to overcome ordinary emotions through this episode. It is again interesting to know that Seetha gets shelter in the hermitage of Valmiki in the forest. He looks after the upbringing of Lava and Kusha. Seetha used to the hardships of life does not even complain about Rama. She only blames her fortune of being born as a women as the cause of all her trouble. Later when Rama seeks to reunite with Seetha she enters the bosom of earth and rejects Rama. The relationship between Rama and Seetha is one which largely features suspicion and intolerance.

Though the notion of Ram Rajya appears to be utopian, one can still see many feuds and conflicts even there. Partriarchy and idealization of the individual makes it more similar to existing societies. We can also see a desire to question even the most unchallenged and accepted norms and individuals. Can we not then see 5this also as foundation for the spirit of democracy and liberation too?

In all, the feuds within the families in Ramayana lead to many tragedies and mishaps. Valmiki through this piece aims to uphold the importance of love, care, affection and trust in family life. He cautions others about the conflicts that can arise in any family.

Born as a 'Nishada' (hunter), Valmiki's worldview and culture is what that influences his art. Valmiki's act of producing a refined work like Ramayana devoid of all traits of barbarity associated with hunters' makes him a model for future generations. Just as human beings extract all the gifts of nature to one's advantage, one must also make use of Ramayana and derive pleasure accompanied by the light of wisdom and realization. For a world which is bruised by inhuman activities of terrorism, an equally foul politics on the one hand and obsolete people disillusioned by the society aimlessly living on the other, a work like Ramayana becomes a tool for progress. It gives to us a sense of direction and purpose. Valmiki, undoubtedly becomes the driving force in this scenario.

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# RAMA STORY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

---- Satya Vrat Shastri

There are wide variations in the story in all the Southeast Asian versions not only mutually but also from the main source of it, the Ramayana of Valmiki. That was but inevitable. The story had to undergo the process of acculturation in the country it was adopted. Further, it was not Vālmīki's version alone which travelled to lands far and near. Many versions had come to develop even in India itself. With the migrants moving out these also moved out with the result that what developed in the countries of Asia was a good amalgam of a variety of versions with a fair sprinkling of local offshoots. The Rāma story in each country got so transformed as to look pretty different from others of the like. With just the kernel of it intact, it came to acquire a shape and form of its own.

A comparative study of the different versions of it, both Indian and foreign, is a long-felt desideratum. There are two areas in which it can be undertaken. One area is the new episodes, the episodes not found in any of the version/s of India that have come to appear in it in countries of Southeast Asia. The other area is the differences that had surfaced in the treatment of common episodes in different countries. It is the second area which is of particular interest revealing as it does the various undercurrents at play in reshaping the episodes. These undercurrents could be due to the ingenuity or innovation of the local people, the story-tellers, the rhapsodists who would be wont to add new elements to the old narratives or reshape them to make them more spicy to suit the local taste. They would put to the optimum use the freedom they have as narrators. Their target being the audience, they have to serve it the fare which would tickle it the most. That fare they have to serve in a manner that would produce the maximum impact. The same is also true of the writers with their target the readers.

By way of illustration a few of the episodes may well be taken up here.

### The Death of Ravana

According to the Vālmīki Ramayana on the eve of the fight between Rāma and Rāvaṇa the sage Agastya who had come to witness the encounter drew near Rāma and advised him to recite the Ādityahṛdaya, the hymn in praise of Āditya, the Sun-God which would enable him to achieve victory over all his enemies. Rāma did as advised. The fight began. A head after head of Rāvaṇa Rāma cut asunder to see it reunited instantly much to his astonishment and discomfiture. The charioteer

upon this reminded him to shoot the Brahmāstra at Rāvaṇa which tore his chest and killed him.

According to the Rāmakien, the Thai Rāmāyaṇa it is not the heads but the limbs of Rāvaṇa which are severed and reunited with the body instantly. To surprised Rāma Vibhīṣaṇa volunteers the information that it would continue to be so and Rāvaṇa would continue to defy death until his soul kept in a cage in the Āśrama of his preceptor Khobut (Goputra) is killed first. This task Hanumān proposes to accomplish. Accompanied with Onkhot (Aṅgada) he goes to ~~Khobut~~ Goputra/ and posing disaffection with Rāma he persudes him to introduce him and Onkbot to Rāvaṇa. Goputra carrying the cage with him at his suggestion--the cage should not be left unguarded in the hermitage in his (Goputra's) absence --he tricks him in handing over the cage to him which enables him to crush the soul and bury it deep under the sand of the sea. It is after this that Rāma's arrow pierced ~~thexxxxx~~ Rāvaṇa's chest.

The Hikayat Seri Rama of Malaysia records the rather unusual fact of Rāvaṇa having an eleventh head, a small one, at the back of the right ear. When in spite of the fierce fight Rāvaṇa does not die Sītā sends a message to Rāma that it is in the eleventh head that Rāvaṇa has his life. It is the vital part of his body. It is only when Rāma pierces this part that Rāvaṇa comes close to death. He keeps lying in an injured state on the Serandiv mountain. It is there that life slowly ebbs away from him.

The Rāmāyaṇa Kekavin of Indonesia has aan altogether a different version of the episode. Rāma showered a volley of arrows on Rāvaṇa which caused him no hurt. The arrows had, however, the impact of making Rāvaṇa slide back till he came close to ~~thexxrocks~~ two rocks which there closed in upon him with great speed sandwitching him in the process. The harder he tried to free himself from them, the tighter turned their grip. Trapped among them he ultimately lost his life. The rocks were no other than his own daughters whom he had killed earlier. Their souls were awaiting to avenge their murder. The opportunity came when Rāvaṇa slid back under the impact of Rāma's arrows.

Killing of Marīca

According to the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa at the report of Sūrpaṇakhā of the slaying of Khara and Dūṣaṇa and the fourteen thousand demons in Janasthāna by Rāma singlehandedly which took away from the minds of the ṛṣis their fear of them and her deformity at the hands of Lakṣmaṇa in her effort to carry away Sītā of inestimable beauty for him to be his wife, Rāvaṇa goes over to Mārīca and asks him to assume the form of a golden deer with silver spots and and flit about Rāma's hamlet to catch the eye of Sītā who would ask her husband and Lakṣmaṇa to get hold of you. On initial refusal he relents at Rāvaṇa's remonstration and does as he had asked him to. Sītā takes fancy to it. Rāma pursues it and is carried afar, the deer dodging it, which ultimately is pierced by his arrow but which before dying cries aloud, O Sītā, O Lakṣmaṇa in an attempt to dupe the hapless lady in despatching Lakṣmaṇa to rescue her husband, thinking him to be in distress and reverting to his original demonic form, creating thus an opportunity for/ Rāvaṇa to abduct her, she being all by herself in the hamlet./

This episode which is common to almost all the versions of the Rāma story in Southeast Asia has a number of inner variations.

In Pha Lak Pha Lam, the Laotian Rāmāyaṇa Rāma whispers in the ear of his brother that a golden deer is an impossibility when Sītā asks him to bring it for her. The words of Rāma though uttered in whisper catch Sītā's ears who then pulls out an arrow, in a fit of rage, her wish not being honoured by him. As she is about to dig it into her breast, [Rāma in horror snatches it away from her and proceeds to catch the deer,] realizing the intensity of her longing for it.

The deer -turned demon does not lose life even pierced by Rāma's arrow. When Lakṣmaṇa approaches Rāma on hearing his (Mārīca's) treacherous cry, he finds him still gasping for breath. He shoots an arrow at it. Life in him still lingering on, Rāma again shoots an arrow at him which kills him. Thus the demon is killed with three arrows, one of which is of Lakṣmaṇa, a material departure from the Vālmīkian account.

The Pha Lak Pha Lam account of Mārīca's killing is found with a little variation in the Indonesian Rāmāyaṇa. There it is not Rāma's arrow which kills him. It is that of Lakṣmaṇa instead.

In the Myanmar Rāmāyaṇa it is Trigatāthat is how Sūrpaṇakhā is called there--who transforms herself into a golden deer. It was she who was shot at by Rāma.

Lakṣmaṇa-rekhā
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Tulasīdāsa in his Rāmacaritamānasa has recorded the fact that Lakṣmaṇa before leaving to be with Rāma after the false cry in distress draws a line outside his hut as precaution advising Sītā not to overstep it to ensure her safety. The reference to this which has come to be called Lakṣmaṇa-rekhā after the name of Lakṣmaṇa is met with in the Hikayat Seri Rāma. In the Myanmar Rāmāyaṇa Lakṣmaṇa draws three lines on concentric circles around Sita. There is nothing of this in the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa.

Abduction of Sita
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In the Vālmīki Rāmāyana Rāvaṇa is shown to assume the form of an ascetic and approach Sītā in the absence of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Sītā receives him well and tells everything about herself and her family along with the reason as to why she is in the forest. Rāvaṇa after winning her confidence because of his appearance of a Brahmin ascetic proposes to her and at her firm reprimand comes back to his original demon form and carries her off.

In the Indonesian Ramayana he is shown to visit Rāma's hut and beat the bushes around hard with his staff as Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā are asleep. This he does ostensibly to test his prowess. Even though a doughty warrior, he wants to test his strength and the awareness of the enemy who, however weak, as per his calculation need not be underestimated. There is nothing of it in any of the other Rāmāyaṇas.

Fight with Jaṭāyu
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As Sītā is being carried by Rāvaṇa, she notices the eagle Jaṭāyu and requests it to convey the news of her abduction to Rāma. Jaṭāyu's response to the situation is typical of him. First crying foul of him for his vile deed and reviling him in the harshest of the terms he, though worn out with age, engages him in a stiff duel wherein he reduces Rāvaṇa to utmost straights first, breaking his bow, the flag, and the chariot and then killing the charioteer and lasly tearing his (Rāvaṇa's) back with claws and pulling out his hair. He is downed by the latter with the severing of his wings and the sides with his sword. This is Vālmīki's version.

In the Thai Rāmakien it is common with Vālmīki upto the point Jaṭāyu has an upper hand over Rāvaṇa. As he, the latter, lies crestfallen

having been badly mauled, Jaṭāyu boasts that nothing can kill him except the ring in the finger of Sītā, the boast which reveals to the unscrupulous adversary who at once jumps, pulls out the ring from Sītā's finger and flings it at the bird chopping off his wings. This incident is recorded in the Malaysian Hikayat Seri Rama too.

## Contact with Sugrīva

As per the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa Sugrīva noticing two unknown men in the forest sends Hanumān to find out their identity. It is he who brings the former to Rāma telling all about the hostility between him and his brother Vālin who had excommunicated him snatching away his wife also from him.

According to the Rāmavatthu of Myanmar Rāma and Lakkhana (Lakṣmaṇa) came to Ceylone Oak tree in the course of their wanderings in search of Sītā. There Rāma fell into sleep leaning his head against Lakkhana's lap. Thugeit (Sugrīva) an exiled ape at that time was sitting on a branch of that tree. A gadfly appearing there suddenly stung Lakkhana who, in spite of it, did not move at all lest his brother's sleep were to be disturbed. Thugyeit was deeply touched by this sight. He thought of his own plight wherein his brother was so hostile to him as to throw him out of his kingdom. The contrast in the attitude of the two brothers, Lakkhana and Vālin, so moved him as to make tears flow down his eyes which fell on Rāma's chest. Noticing him Rāma suspecting something foul took up his bow. The ape in fear came down from the tree top and told him all about himself winning in the process Rāma's sympathy and a promise by him of his help.

The incident of the flow of tears also occurs in paintings of Oup Muang of Vientiene and those of Wat Pa....Ke or Khe...of Luang Prabang of Laos. In the former due to the interchange of the names of Phali Chan (Vālicandra or Vālin) and Sukrip (Sugrīva), it is Phali Chan who is shown to shed them on having run away to avoid pursuing the quarrel that had ensued between the two with the blocking of the cave by the former (Phali Chan) under the mistaken notion that the former was motivated in doing so to grab the kingdom of Kukkuṭavadī (Kiṣkindhā) after the duel with Thorapī in a cave. So copious were the tears that thry formed a river. The painting shows Phra Lak (Laksmana) and Phra Lam (Rāma) standing on the other side of this river.

In the Wat Pa...or Khe... paintings of Luang Prabang the incident of shedding tears occurs when Rāma while wandering in the forest in search of Sītā one day asks Hanuman to bring water. Approaching a river he tastes it. He finds it saline. As he advances in search of its source,

he notices a red monkey shedding tears. It is his tears that have turned into water. Listening to his tale he comes to know that he is Sukrīp who has been turned out by his brother Phāli (Vālin). Hanumān brings him to Phra Lām (Rāma) who promises to help him against his brother.

The motif of Rāma taking rest under the shade of a tree while wandering in the forest in Sita's search in the Pha Lak Pha Lam of Laos and the Ramakien of Thailand. In the Luang Prabang version of Pha Lak Pha Lam as found in the Wat Pa...Ke or Khe.. murals Hanumon (Hanumān) is shown on a tree. Pha Lak shoots an arrow at him which he wards off with his bare hands. With only one arrow left, Pha Lak approaches Pha Lām and tells him of the unusual strength of the ape. Pha Lām tells Pha Lak that he is their friend. Hanumon also joins them in the search for Sītā.

According to the Thai Rāmakien Hanumān sitting on a tree became suspicious of the two brothers Rāma and Lak (Lakṣmaṇa) who were taking rest under it and began to shake its branches to draw attention. Afraid that that might disturn Rāma's sleep Lak took up his bow and arrow to shoot at him . The ape snatched these from him with unusual ease. Astonished at his strength Phra Lak woke up Phra Rām who looked up and saw the ape with the distinguishing marks on his body. Hanumān realized soon as to who the men were. He came down from the tree and requested Rāma to take him in his service.

## Birth of Ramayanic Characters

### Rāvaṇa

Before an attempt is made to note the variations in the accounts of the birth of Rāvaṇa in different versions of Southeast Asia, it is pertinent to note the various names he is called in them. In the Myanmar version he is called Datthagiri, Sanskrit Daśagrīva, one with ten necks. In the Thai Ramakien he is Totsakan, Sanskrit Dasakaṇṭha, one with ten throats or necks or Raphanāsun, Sanskrit Ravaṇāsura. Of the two by far the most popular is Totsakan. In the Malaysian Hikayat Seri Rāma he is either Ruwana or Duwana. In other versions he is Rāvaṇa.

In the Rāmavatthu, one of the Myanmar versions, the account of his birth is as follows : Kuntī, the daughter of the king of Rākṣasas had spent a long time in meditation. One day Mahā Brahmā came to her. She offered him three sprays of mango fruits. The first spray bore ten fruits. The second bore only one big fruit. As she dropped the third spray, she had to wash it. Maha Brahmā stroked Kuntī's belly around navel with his hand three times and said that she would deliver three sons. The first born was given the name Datthagiri, the second one with an enormous body Gombiganna (Kŭmbhakarṇa) and the third one Bibhithana (Vibhisana).

The Thai Ramakien has altogether a different story. It mentions a demon of the name of Nonthuk, Sanskrit Nandaka, who was a great devotee of Śiva. Whoever of His devotees would go to Kailāsa to see Him, he would wash his/her feet. Out of fun the deities would pull out some hair from his head with the result with the passage of time he lost all his hair on the head making him look rather ugly. He approached the Lord with the complaint of misbehavious of the deities towards him for no fault of his. The Lord told him that if in future if any of the deities were to trouble him, he just would have to point the index finger at the trouble-maker. The finger being as hard as diamond would have the power to kill any one at who it would be pointed. With this special power Nonthuk would point the finger at any deity who would play mischief with him and would make him drop dead. Seeing the demon at his finger-pointing spree, the deities approached the Lord and preferred a request to Him to save them. The Lord thought of Nārāyaṇa who appeared before Him and asked him to help the deities. Nārāyaṇa assumed the form of Mohinī, a pretty dancing goddess and invited Nonthuk to dance with 'her' following her in her movements. In

the course of dancing Mohinī pointed her index finger at her legs with the unknowing demon following ~~a~~ suit breaking his legs thereby. Before breathing his last the demon saw the dancing woman revert to his original shape of Narāi (Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu) with four arms. Realizing that he had been tricked, he rebuked him that he had played false with him. Had he engaged him in a duel, he would have known whether he could kill him or not. Even the duel would not have been fair, said he, the two contestants being unequal, he having four arms and he himself having the two of them only. Narāi at this said , well, in the next birth he, the demon, would be born with ten heads and twenty arms while he would incarnate himself with just one head and two arms. It was Nonthuk who ~~was~~ became Rāvaṇa in the next birth and it was Nārāyaṇa who was born as Rāma.

The episode is found with some variation in the Khvay Thuaraphi the Laotian text from Luang Prabang but not in the context of the birth of Rāvaṇa. It occurs there without any connection with the main narrative. Nonthuk is named there Nanthiyak who is said to have poisonous hands. Whenever he pointed his hand at anybody, he would die. King Thattaratha, the king of Kāśi and brother of Virunlaha, the ruler of Lankā, announced a reward for one who would kill him. A lady named Khanthaphī came forward to do the needful. She approached the demon and lured him with the thirty-two characteristics of women. She told him that while she was worthy of being his wife, he was not worthy of being her husband. Thereupon he said that he would do whatever she wanted him to. Khanthaphī then began to dance. So did the demon. In the course of the dance Khanthaphī raised raised her arm and pointed her fingers towards her head. Not realizing that ~~his~~/ hand was poisonous, the demon did likewise (in order to learn every movement from her) and fell dead instantly.

Accordong to the Hikayat Seri Rama Rāvaṇa was the demon Hiranyākṣa in previous birth. He was so wicked that his father banished him. In the course of his wanderings he reached the island of Siṁhala and practised penance there. Allah sent Adam to him. He was made the ruler of the earth, the watery and the nether regions as also of Indraloka. He married the princess of every region and begot many sons. On the earth he laid the city of Lankā.

The geneology of Rāvaṇa is given differently in different versions. According to the Hikayat Seri Rāma he was the son of Citrabāha, the descendant of Brahmā, the ruler of Indrapura, who had married Rakṣapaṇḍī, the daughter of a demon called Datin Kuac. After Rāvaṇa had reached Lanka were born Kumbhakarṇa, Bibusanam (Vibhiṣana) and

Surapandaki (Śūrpaṇakhā). According to the Serat Kāṇḍa of Indonesia Citrabaha had Rāvaṇa from Indratani and Ambakarna (Kumbhakarṇa), Sarapandaki and Bibhsanam from Sukesī, his other wife. The Thai Ramakien mentions five wives of Lastien, son of Caturabaktra of whom Sunandā was the mother of Kubera, Citramālī that of Devanāsura, Suvarṇamālā that of Aṁsaghāta, Varaprabhā that of Māraṇa and Rajatā that of Totsakan (Daśakaṇṭha), Bibhek (Vibhiṣaṇa), Dusana, Khara and Samanakhā (Śūrpaṇakhā).

Of the two murals of Pha Lak and Pha Lan, the Laotian Rāma story, the one Oup Muang has a peculiar description of the account of the birth of Rāvaṇa. Chao Virunhak who is said to be the ruler of Inthapathanakhom, Sanskrit Indraprasthanagara, unlike the Khvay Thuaraphi text of the Royal Palace, Luang Prabang as the ruler of Laṅkā, is issueless. He asks his wife to go in for Pathanā (Prārthanā) as a result of which a son is born. At the same time a child, deformed in figure, with no arms and legs is born in a farmer's family. Named Loum Lou he is no other than the inperfect incarnation of Maha Phom (Mahā Brahmā) who had courted imperfection in his figure out of conceit which had prompted him to ignore the advice of the Devas to have his body moulded like theirs before taking birth on the earth. He wanted to come to the earth in the form he was. Hence he got reborn in his malformed shape. Indra descending from heaven took away from the farmer working in the field the malformed body of his son and transformed it into a handsome figure very much similar to his own. With his new figure and youthfulness Loum Lou went one night to Sujadā, Indra's wife, to make love to her. She came to know only in the morning that she had spent the night with a wrong man because Indra, her real husband, would come to her only once in the night. Since in the preceding night he had come twice, it would mean that one of the two times it was not Indra but some other person of his shape and form. She had thus committed adultery, she thought, though unwittingly. She requested Indra to allow her to come down to the earth as punishment. Sujādā was thus born as Nang Sīdā and Loum Lou as Hāphanāsuan, Rāvaṇasura. Sīdā in this incarnation was his daughter.

In the depiction of the murals of Wat Pa...Ke or Khe...of Luang Prabang of Laos the story of the birth of Tosokonto (Daśakaṇṭha) is exactly the same as in the Thai Ramakien. He was Nonthuk of the previous birgh as in the Ramakien. In these murals he is depicted as of golden complexion.

## Birth of Hanuman

In the Thai Ramakien the birth of Hanuman is described in an episode which is an extension of the one which delineates that of Vālin and Sugrīva. The childless King Kodam takes to the life of a hermit and performs a fire ritual from where appears a beautiful maiden whom he calls Kalā-achanā. He takes her as his wife. She gives birth to a daughter Sawāhā (Svāhā). Once in his absence Indra comes to her and makes love to her by which she gives birth to a boy Kakashbiri (Phālī, Vālin). After some time Athit, Āditya, the Sun-god descends on the earth. Through contact with him Kalā-āchanā gives birth to another boy called Sukrīp (Sugriva). Kodam takes all the three, the two boys and the girl, to be his off-springs. Once he takes them for bath; the sons he carries on his person, Kakashbiri on his back and Sukrip in his arms and makes Sawāhā walk by his side hand in hand giving rise to jealousy in her on account of the discriminatory treatment--that is her feeling--meted out to her prompting her to remark because of her being an eye witness to her mother's infidelity that he was showing more favour to others' children than to his own, taking him all by surprise and making him throw them all in river with the prayer that were they his children in reality they would swim back to him, if it were otherwise, they would turn into monkeys. Sawaha swam back to him while the boys turned into monkeys whose fathers built a city for them called Khidkin (Kiskindhā). Kodam curses Kalā-achanā to turn into stone.

Angry with Sawāhā for letting out the secret, Kala-achanā curses her to continue standing on one leg atop the mountain Djakrawan open-mouthed subsisting only on wind till she would bear a son. Isuan, Īśvara (Siva) sees her and orders Wind-god Pai (Vāyu) to take his celestial weapons and put them in the mouth of Sawāhā so that she might have a son whose body would be composed of the aggregate of them (the weapons). Pai doing what he was asked to, Sawāhā conceives and gives birth to a monkey thirty months later. This monkey called Hanumān emerges from her mouth and flies to heaven. Pai names him Hanuman.

The Wat Oup Muang murals of Vientiene, Laos give a little twist to the above episode. They depict a seer of the name of Totam (Gautama) whose beard is so big as to the home to the nests of two small sparrows, Nok Chuk picked up a quarrel one day, the female one charging the male one with enjoying another female one the previous night and the male one contesting her with the remark that had it been so, they would be following the wrong path as was done by the seer who had provided shelter to them, the wrong path being the seer not going in for marriage. The desire in the seer for having a wife having been kindled with the above words, he created a woman with his magical powers by rubbing his body

called appropriately Khaisrī (Sanskrit Kāyaśrī, the beauty created from the body). He begot from her a daughter called Phongsī (Priyaśrī). From here onwards the story is very much the same as in the Thai Rāmakien with only the names changed. Due to contact with the Sun she gives birth to a son named Sukrīp and with that of Phra In (Indra) to Phāli Chan (Vālicandra). Phongsī disclosing the secret to her father all the three children are thrown by him in a river with the prayer that in case they were not his children, let them sink, otherwise let them be back safe and sound. Phongsī comes back but not the two boys. They do not sink in the river either. They swim across it and reach a city called Kukkuṭavadī (Kiṣkindhā) whose ruler had just expired without any issue. The elder of the two boys is proclaimed its ruler.

Khaisrī, the mother of Phongsī getting incensed at the disclosure by the latter of her contact with two strangers turns her into a female monkey through her magical power while Rāma on the way to Chanok's (Janaka's) place to lift the bow turns into a male monkey by climbing the wrong branch of the Manikodh tree and helping himself with its fruits. It is through his contact with Phongsī turned female monkey that Hanumān is born.

According to the Rāma Jātaka an unnamed seer living in a forest had a daughter Phaengsī and later on twin sons Sangkīb and Phālichan (the names are mixed up here ; Sangkīb or Sugrīva is made elder and Phālichan younger. As all the three grow, the seer is gripped with the suspician that the children are not his. By invoking divine help for verification he throws all of them in a river. Phaengsi swims back but not the sons who turn into monkeys and disappear in the forest to found a settlement of their own called Kāsī (Kiṣkindhā).

The Wat Pa...Ke or Khe... version of Luang Prabang differs from the Oup Muang version of Vientiene version and the Rāma Jātaka in two respects. It gives the name Sawaha to Phaengsī and makes Khaisi pronounce a curse on her --its nature it does not specify--to free her from which Phayu (Vāyu) marries her at the instance of Indra and it is through this marriage that Hanumān is born.

In the Khvay Thuaraphi text it is a different story altogether. Nang Khanthaphī, the lady who had danced with Nanthiyak and had killed by making him follow her movements, returns to King Thaṭṭaratha to whom she demonstrates on a query from him the act of dancing. Her dance so excites the king that he ejaculates. Khanthaphī collects his semen and wanders about to dispose it off. She comes across Nang Kāsī, the blind mother of Ongkhot (Angada) and Valayot under the shade of a fig tree. She puts the semen in her (blind lady's) mouth who consequently gives birth to a son Hualaman (Hanuman).

In one of the versions of the Malaysian Hikayat Seri Rama the element of ejaculation is common to Khay Thuaraphi text of Laos but is not Thaṭṭaratha who ejaculates there. It is Rāma instead. He gets passionate on seeing

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Añjanī standing atop a needle with her mouth gaping. On account of the curse of her mother (incurred by her through the disclosure of her physical contact with two strangers). On ejaculation he has his semen enclosed in a leaf which he gets inserted in the mouth of Añjanī. This results in the birth of Hanuman.

Birth of Angada

According to the Thai Rāmakien Totsakan (Daśakaṇṭha=Rāvaṇa) on his way to Laṅkā once flew over the palace of Phālī (Vālin), the ruler of Khidkin (Kiṣkindhā) who got deeply offended by the fact somebody could have the temerity to fly over his head. He sprang into the sky, fought with Totsakan and snatched away Montho (Mandodarī) from him. Going back to Laṅkā in great distress Totsakan went to seek the advice of his preceptor Khobut (Goputra) in the matter. Khobut went to see his friend Oṅkhot (Aṅgada), Phāli's own preceptor. Consequently Montho was given back to Totsakan. She was pregnant at that time. Before departure Ongkhot took out the foetus from her womb and put it into that of a she-goat. When the time of delivery came he took out the child from the womb of the goat, gave him his own name and returned him to his father Phālī.

According to the Laotian text Khvay ThuaraphiOṅgkhot was so called because he was born with his limbs (oṅg) curved (khot) after his mother was wounded by the buffalo Thuaraphi.

The popular episode of Hanuman having leapt up to the sky to devour the Sun mistaking it to be a fruit is found with various modifications in the different versions of Southeast Asia. As per Vālmīki Hanumān had attempted to devour the Sun out of acute hunger in the absence of his mother Añjanā having gone out to the forest immediately after delivery to gather fruits. As per the Khvay Thuaraphī text of Laos Hanumān's mother had died seven days after his birth but before dying she had advised him to take the ripe fig as his food recounting to him her own experience of survival in the same manner under the fig tree. Since Hanumān had perched on the chariot of the Sun-god, his whole body had got burnt, an account at variance with that of Vālmīki according to whom the Sun spares him in view of his being just an infant and the great tasks that he is destined to accomplish. In the Khvay Thuaraphī version the Sun turning and marking the red bubbles on the chariot and feeling that a perso of great spiritual merit might have been killed applies the liquid Nam Chai Khai on the bubbles of blood making Hualamān arise out of them with more spiritual powers than before with the capacity to to turn himself int

anything he wanted.

The Rāma Jataka of Laos refers to a character called Kwan Thaofā who is just peculiar to it being not to be found in any other version. It is possible that the reference is to Oṅgkhot, though it is not possible to indentify him; there being no phonetic simi- larity between the two names Kwan Thaofā and Oṅgkhot. As per the Rāma Jātaka after his alliance with the monarch of Kasi (=Kiṣkindhā); i.e. Sangkīb (Sugrīva) Rama having been released from his curse of his existence as a monkey which he had incurred by eatind a fruit cures Kodtarāj, the wife of Sangkīb of her blindness which she had acquired in assisting her husband in a fight with his brother which had led being wounded in the eye and as a bargain is enabled to have a son by Rāma (Rāma) who later is to become one of his leading generals in his fight with Rāvaṇa.

Birth of Vālin and Sugrīva

Most of the versions agree in making them the sons of Phra In and Phra Āthit (Indra and Ādityа) respectively from a lady called Kala-achanā or Khāisī who was married to a King Kodom (Gautama) as he is called in the Rāmakien or a seer Totam in Oup Muang version of Vientiene or an unnamed seer in the Rāma Jataka who are thrown in river by the king or the seer to verify as to whether they are his progeny or not, the verification resting on the stipulation that were they to be his sons, they would swim back to him. Since they were not the real sons, they do not swim back, they turn into monkeys instead. Their fathers (as per the Rāmakien) or they themselves (as per the Rama Jataka) build a city Khidkin (as per the Rāmakien) or Kasi (as per the Rāma Jātaka) for them or the elder one of them (as per Wat Oup Muang) is proclaimed the ruler of that city already in exis- tence whose ruler had died childless.

The Rāma Jātaka makes them twin brothers.

The development of enmity between them has its origin in the Thoraphī episode. Before entering the cave to engage Thoraphī in a duel Phālī (as per the Rāmakien) or Sangkhīb (as per the Rāma Jātaka) or Wat Oup Muang) had instructed Sukrīp to infer the result of the com- bat through the colour of the blood; if it is deep red, it is that of Thoraphī, if it is light red, it is that of Phālī (as per the Rāma- kien) or Sangkhib (as per the Rāma Jātaka). While the duel is on, it starts raining which completely upsets the arrangement. With the mixture

of the rain water the deep red blood of Thoraphī killed by Phālī or Sangkhīb turns light red prompting Sukrīp or Phālī Chan to conclude that it is Phālī or Sangkhīb who is killed. To prevent the exit of Thoraphī he closes the opening of the cave with huge boulders whom Phālī or Sangkhīb finds very hard to remove to come out sowing the suspician in his mind that his brother had deliberatel indulged in this mischief to gain kingdom for himself. The seed of enmity sown in Phālī or Sangkhīb makes him banish Sukrīp or Phālī Chan. The enmity finds its culmination after a series of fights in the slaying of Phālī or Sangkhīb through an arrow shot by Rāma with whom Sukrīp or Phālī Chan had entered into an alliance.

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## Episodes Peculiar to different Versions

### Rama Jataka of Laos

The Rama Jataka recirds among the consta t companions of Rama besides Lakdhna one Manikab, a divine steed who is presented to him by Indra. He is not only the resourceful mount of Rama but also his trusted friend and counsellor sharing all his deliberations. He is said to have saved the life of Lakshna when in a frenzy of anger Rāma was about strike him (Lakshna) on learning of the loss of Sītā (his fault being not to have obeyed his instructions in not leaving Sītā alone). He is also said to possess magical powers. He is said to have gone into trance making Rāvaṇa come out of his lair and be vanquished by Rama.

Next is the episode of Kodtarāj, wife of Sangkhib who on regaining her eyesight through the grace of Rama bore him a son Kwan Thaofa who together with Huanman , another son of Rāma through Phaengsī plays an important part in the conduct of war with Ravana.

The Rama Jataka also has a character Munyiraj, the king of Inthapat who is the main supplier of manpower for battle.

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